THE SMART SET

A Magazine of Cleverness

To Amuse, Not to Instruct

THE CHAMELEON

A KISS FOR THE OLD MARQUIS

CAGED

WINGS IN THE MESH

THE INTERLUDE

THE LITTLE GRAND DUCHESS

THE GARGOYLE

NEVERTHELESS I LOVE HER

MIRAGE

AND MANY OTHER STORIES, POEMS, EPIGRAMS, ETC.

COMMENTARY

JULY 1919

1/3 NET

DAY & NIGHT WEAR

(Regd. Trade Mark.)

"Viyella" (Regd. Trade Mark.) "AZA" "Clydella"

WM. HOLLINS & CO., LTD. (Trade only) 24-26 Newgate Street, London, E.C. 1.

THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

The entire contents of this magazine are protected by copyright in all countries and must not be reprinted

Editor—J. W. MILNE

JULY, 1919

METAMORPHOSIS	Van Vechten Hostetter	205
CAGED	Thyra Samter Winslow	207
THE FRUITS	Dorothy Barne	240
THE CHAMELEON	Thomas Beer	241
NEVERTHELESS I LOVE HER	Jacques Yarnell	246
THE FOREIGNER	L. M. Hussey	247
THE GARGOYLE	Richmond Brooks Barrett	257
APPEAL	Dorothy Yawger	263
CIRCE	Louis de Salis	264
A KISS FOR THE OLD MARQUIS	Gertrude Brooke Hamilton	265
REMORSE	June Gibson	274
WINGS IN THE MESH	Milnes Levick	275
A CHANT	Charles Glendon	283
TO ONE IN FAVOUR	Djuna Barnes	284
THE LITTLE GRAND DUCHESS	Solita Solano	285
THE INTERLUDE	John C. Cavendish	287
WILD OATS	Joseph Bibb, Jr.	298
SONG	Glenn Ward Dresbach	298
MIRAGE	E. Michaelis	299
ABOUT FASHIONS AND OTHER THINGS	Various Hands	302
MOTORS AND MOTORING	W. Whitall	306

Annual Subscription, 15/- post free. Foreign Subscription, 16/- post free.

Published by THE ROLLS HOUSE PUBLISHING CO., LTD., Breams Buildings, E.C., for the Proprietor, I. W. Da Costa.

"The Smart Set" Magazine, Dane's Inn House, 265 Strand, W.C. 2
to which all editorial and advertising matter should be addressed.

THE INDIAN RESTAURANTS LTD.

Open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily,
Sundays from 6 p.m. to 10-30 p.m.

Dining Rooms—Ground & 1st Floors TEL. GERRARD 3272 *Oriental Smoking Lounge—2nd Floor.*

DAINTY TEAS 1st Floor & 2nd Floor 3 p.m. to 5-30 p.m.

12, RUPERT STREET, LONDON, W.1.

Holidays!

BEFORE YOU GO visit your Stationer or Jeweller and buy a Waterman's Ideal—the world's most efficient Fountain Pen. Write all your letters out-of-doors—just when you are in the mood for it. Don't waste the golden hours indoors writing with borrowed pens that do not suit your hand.

There is a just right

Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen

Three types: "Self-filling" and "Safety," 15/- and upwards. "Regular," 10/6 and upwards.

The "Safety" type is Ideal for Outdoor Use. Of Stationers and Jewellers everywhere.

L. G. Sloan, Ltd., The Pen Corner

Kingsway, London, W.C. 2

And 39, Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W. 1

H.M. King Manuel of Portugal

"The Secretary to King Manuel of Portugal is instructed to convey to Messrs. J. Millhoff & Co., Ltd., His Majesty's thanks for the 'De Reszke' Cigarettes. His Majesty has tried them and found them very good."

Max Darewski, Esq., writes: "I find your 'De Reszke' American Cigarettes most excellent in every way. They are a cool, soothing smoke and, unlike most brands of Virginia cigarettes I have tried, do not irritate the throat."

Miss Edith Clegg writes: "Unfortunately I am not a smoker myself, but my friends all say how much they enjoy your 'De Reszke' American blend."

Baroness Orczy writes: "Your 'De Reszke' Cigarettes are delicious, sweet and aromatic."

Bransby Williams, Esq., writes: "Your 'De Reszke' Cigarettes are the very best I know."

GOOD judges unite in praising "De Reszke" Cigarettes. It is for you to put their opinion to the test. Get a box of "De Reszkes"—then you will know what perfection means.

"DE RESZKE" *The Aristocrat of* Cigarettes

Sold at all Military Canteens at Home and Overseas, also Tobacconists and Stores.

Get a stick to-morrow and see how long it lasts!

PRICE'S REGINA Shaving Stick

For 3d. in stamps we will post you a trial sample of Regina.
PRICE'S, BATTERSEA, S.W. 11

Advice to Gentlemen

OF ALL RANKS IN KHAKI AND IN MUFTI TROUBLED WITH

PREMATURE BALDNESS

AND LOSS OF HAIR GENERALLY.

WRITE OR CONSULT—

M. De Neuville

THE HAIR SPECIALIST WITH A REPUTATION.

Write and send Ippilated Hair with Particulars of Health and Scalp conditions, or call, any day but Saturday, between the Hours of 10 and 6 o'clock.

FEES—INCLUDING CONSULTATION, DIAGNOSIS, TREATMENT, PACKING AND POSTAGE, ARE

12/6, 18/6, 24/6, 36/6.

Clients decide the Price of the Treatment.
M. De Neuville adjusts the Quantity to the Price.
TERMS—CASH WITH ORDER WITHOUT EXCEPTION.

M. DE NEUVILLE,
52, Brompton Road, London, S.W. 3.

POPE & BRADLEY
Sole Proprietor H. Dennis Bradley
Civil, Military & Naval Tailors

BEAUX, BUCKS & DANDIES.

By H. DENNIS BRADLEY.

The Beautiful Rag

WAS there anything admirable in the styles of the age which has reduced the world to chaos?

By sheer persistence in self-eulogy the Victorians succeeded in imposing the belief upon a patient world that the Great Exhibition was the apotheosis of culture, and the Royal Academy the apotheosis of all art, and that style and taste being Victorian inventions, the Albert hat and the bustle were the last word in the world of dress.

And in the face of all historical teaching the monstrous doctrine was inculcated that ugliness is masculine, and that fastidiousness, particularly in dress, is a sign of effeminacy, of decadence.

The world has abandoned most of the Albertian doctrine and is reforming most things: yet the moment reform in man's dress is mentioned, the cry goes up that "dandyism" is effeminate.

A quaint battle-cry of a barbarous age!

* * *

I would commend these critics to study history. I would ask them to learn that Byron was neither effeminate nor a fool. D'Orsay had character and wit, the maligned Brummell was a man of parts. Disraeli was a notorious dandy. Dumas the elder and Gautier were lovers of colour and gorgeous attire, whilst in the eighteenth century Hume, Garrick, and Walpole were classed amongst the best dressed men of their age.

The beaux, the bucks, and the dandies of history, from the Restoration to the commencement of the Victorian era, were men to whom the colour and set of a coat, the fold of a cravat, had a meaning, and men who deliberately prided themselves upon their knowledge of dress.

And these men were also as punctilious in the fields of public and private honour—the battle and the duel.

There was nothing peculiarly effeminate in them.

* * * * *

We have vulgarised the clothes tradition.

The reign of the dandies was a reign of men with brains, with ideas; outre, extravagant at times, but with keen artistic sensibilities, men of brilliance whose very fastidiousness was a duty they owed to their own self-respect.

And now a new race of men has arisen who repudiate the interregnum of ugliness—I predict that we are on the eve of a revolution in men's dress.

* * * * *

It will take time for the new colour blended materials to be manufactured, meanwhile the House of Pope & Bradley is supplying the best materials at present procurable. The prices are not profiteering and are within reach of men with incomes of less than £10,000 a year. Lounge Suits from **£9 9 0**; Dinner Suits from **£12 12 0**; Overcoats from **£10 10 0.**

TWO ESTABLISHMENTS ONLY
14 OLD BOND STREET, W. &
11-13 SOUTHAMPTON ROW, W.C.

SIMPLEX

INVITES the patronage of all readers who desire to retain pleasant memories of Ascot or Goodwood—or any other meeting convenient to you.

There are some who are prejudiced against the idea of receiving advice about racing—but why? If you know a friend in the City—one who is in intimate touch with the right people—do you not simply yearn to ask him to tell you what he knows? Of course you do, and just as the ordinary speculator or investor needs sound advice to guide him in his operations, so does he (or she) who takes a speculative interest in racing.

And why not have it? If you want advice on law, you go to a man of legal experience to get it; if you want advice on your health, you go to an expert for it, so why not seek the advice of an expert at racing? I have owned many winners, and I get to know the business intended by a good many stables, which knowledge, combined with experience and good judgment, and the fact that I spare no outlay and no trouble which will bring WINNERS, necessarily results in profit, both to myself and to those who patronise me.

Now, the first thing to remember is this—It is of no use backing horses every day just for the sake of having a bet. The only sure way to success is to *wait*, to wait until something really reliable comes along, and that is my part of the business, and I observe it strictly. I cannot and *will not* wire every day.

Another thing is, to unalterably confine your operations to *One horse*, and never more under any circumstances whatever. Then, by following these occasional items of genuine information, strictly one horse, you can absolutely rely on beating your bookmaker, and I want you to accept my help, for I know that I can win money for you regularly.

If you are attending Ascot, or Goodwood, or if you are staying at home and desire to take a speculative interest in these or any other race-meetings, you cannot do better than patronise me, for I have the best men on the Turf working for me, I employ men who attend every meeting and travel the training quarters, ever on the search for winners, and I am confident that the profit of the season 1919 will surpass even that of past years. I lay no claim to infallibility, but I DO claim experience and judgment, which MUST be beneficial to my followers.

I supply the information each day that I advise anything to be done, my terms being the odds to two sovereigns each winner. Add £2 to your stake every time, and the profit of that £2 (as paid to you by your bookmaker) is what you pay me for each win, as my fee for the advice. Don't run away with the idea that the information is dear, for it is nothing of the sort. It is not what you pay for WINS that counts against you, but what you pay your bookmaker for losers, and you will win oftener than you will lose if you follow me. Moreover, the information will really cost you very little, if you add my fee to your own stake every time, as the only out-of-pocket cost to you is when the information loses, which is not often.

Intending followers must send four stamped and addressed forms (or their cost), with clear instructions for me to follow, and settle promptly for winners as due. No commissions are executed, but I can wire direct to the Agents of those who cannot personally attend to wires.

Fill in form below, and send along as directed, so as to start your new income NOW.

SIMPLEX ADVICE BUREAU.

.....191.....

To SIMPLEX, 1, New Oxford-street, London, W.C.

Dear Sir,

Please register me as a follower of the above. I agree to return you the odds to Two Pounds on all winners, and I enclose four stamped telegrams (or their cost). I shall remit promptly as soon as I know results. I am of age and do not reside at any School or College.

Signed .....

Remember 4 stamped forms (or cost) for me to wire you.

.....

.....

If at Ascot—Goodwood—or anywhere else—you want SIMPLEX.

New Waistcoat Jumper

Made by our own workers in rich heavy charmeuse, design in wool, and oriental motif, new length for wearing under coats, in black, navy, wine, grey, and mastic shades.

PRICE

63/-

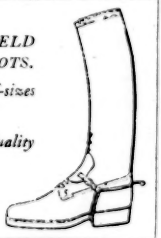
MILITARY FIELD SERVICE BOOTS.

All sizes and half-sizes stocked.

Actual £7/7/0 quality

Special Price

59/6



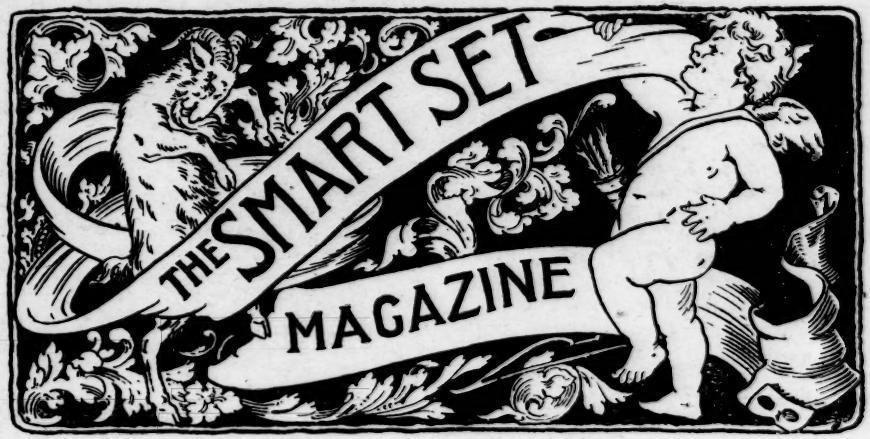
CATALOGUE POST FREE

MARSHALL & SNELGROVE

VERE STREET AND OXFORD STREET

LONDON W.1

Vol. LVIII JULY, 1919 No. 3



UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
JU 24
19
CAMBRIDGE

METAMORPHOSIS

By Van Vechten Hostetter

OLD John Gorham lay deep in his easiest chair in his spacious and dim-lighted library. It was evening after a morning of coupon-clipping —irksome enough even with modern labour-saving devices—and an afternoon of reciprocal boring at the club.

It was old John Gorham's twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. He knew it because he had read it in the newspapers, damn them. One of them had published pictures of him and Mrs. Gorham, side by side and connected with some fancy scroll work, made out of ticker tape most likely.

He supposed it was a picture of Mrs. Gorham anyway. The newspaper said it was and the newspapers were for ever getting things right. And the picture did resemble Mrs. Gorham as he remembered her. Still, he reflected, his memory for faces was rather poor, although he recognized her name easily enough.

Having developed a doubt, old Gorham was somewhat curious to know if the picture was his wife's. In fact, he was so curious that he was on the point of going up to her boudoir on the third floor for a look at her. But just then he vaguely recalled having heard or read something about her going to Palm Beach. Or was it Camden, Maine?

Still, that may have been last year. And, anyway, he wasn't sure whether the report had her coming or going. Old Gorham was about to ring for a servant to find out if the climb would be of any use, but before he could execute the idea he fell asleep.

* * * * *

Gorham was awakened by laughter, uproarious and harsh, that filled the great library and awoke echoes among the purple wall hangings. It was laughter that would have chilled his blood if that had not been done already. It was the most malicious and inhuman laughter he had ever heard and he had listened to a good many experts in his time.

Blinking until his eyes were accustomed to the dim light, old Gorham saw, seated and facing him, the most disgust-

ing and frightful being in the form of a man that he had ever laid eyes on. Gorham felt some emotion of disgust, though, of course, not enough to endanger his dignity and poise. As for being frightened, he was past fearing anything but a tariff for revenue only.

The creature was naked—a huge, misshapen man-beast, incredibly fat and bloated, filling and bursting out the arms of the roomy chair, which creaked and groaned with each new convulsion of mordacious mirth.

Long, curly, and coarse hair, tangled and matted, like gold bleached to lifelessness, covered the creature's head and hung over its shoulders. Its eyes, small and set deep in fat, were red and bleary, yet cunning and wicked. From the bulbous nose, upturned and flattened, deep and cruel lines ran to the down-turned corners of the mouth. Between them was a moustache—a score of whitish bristles like a pig's. The lips were fat and puffed out and as the thing chortled revealed teeth, uneven, yellow, fanglike. The creature's cheeks hung below its jaws in rolls of morbid fat and its chin merged into its thick neck.

Around the visitor's waist was a well-filled cartridge belt and in either hairy hand, resting on its fat knees, was an automatic pistol.

The intruder, recovering from a final paroxysm of unearthly laughter, put one weapon aside, filled a tumbler from Gorham's decanter of whisky and downed it at a gulp. It smacked its lips vulgarly, bit a chew of tobacco off a plug produced from the cartridge belt and then grinned gloatingly at Gorham.

"Well," it said, "why don't you bid me welcome? Don't you remember me?"

"I'm afraid you have the advantage of me," said Gorham.

"Think hard," said the visitor.

"Who are you and what are you?" asked Gorham with a trace of impatience. "And what are you doing with those pistols?"

"Oh," said the visitor, looking at the weapons pridefully, "they're a little modern equipment I got. Had to, you know—old equipment was artistic enough, but lacked efficiency. I'm in the same business, though—and you?"

"Nothing about me until I know who you are," said Gorham with more animation than he had yet shown.

"Scratch your head," said the creature. "You must remember me."

Gorham scratched and studied his guest keenly.

At last, "It does seem as if I had met you some time or other," he said. "There's something familiar about your face, but I swear I can't place you."

"Keep on trying," said the visitor encouragingly.

Gorham knitted his brows and thought desperately. Presently his face cleared and something of the light of twenty-five years ago came into his eyes.

"Yes, yes, I know you now, but, good Lord, Cupid, how you have changed!"

BY the time a woman has learned how to kiss there is no longer any pleasure in kissing her.

CAGED

By Thyra Samter Winslow

CHAPTER I

LEOTA CLIFFORD was packing her husband's steamer trunk. It was a stupid enough occupation, but it was unbelievably delicious to Leota. Each garment she put into the trunk brought delightful new thoughts into her head.

Leota decided that four sets of medium weight and three sets of light underwear would be sufficient. She folded the awkward garments slowly, tucking into neat squares the unmanageable arms and legs.

—So—Will was going away. He was going to England and would be gone six weeks. Six weeks of freedom! Six weeks of doing what she wanted to do! Six times seven is forty-two—at least Leota thought it was forty-two; she'd have to try it with a pencil, later; arithmetic wasn't one of her strong points—forty-two days of being uncaged! Forty-two days of being herself, of experience, of living!

Leota followed the undergarments with pyjamas. There was a button off one of the coats. Almost unconsciously, she got thread and needle from her work-basket and fastened it. There—no more sewing on of buttons for a long, long time! How she hated it—the button-sewing and the things the button-sewing stood for—domesticity, repression, the cage! She threw out her arms in dramatic agony. How had she stood things—all these years? Nine years of married life—and now she was thirty-two. Nine years of life gone, wasted, lost.

Well, thirty-two was still young. Of course, when the six weeks were over, maybe there would be the cage again. But even then, there would be the memory of the open door, freedom. Maybe, she could find a way to keep the door open a little. There might even be a change, some wonderful opportunity—perhaps she would never have to go back into the cage at all. You can't tell, things like that, still—six weeks of freedom, of being unfettered, might point the way. How had she ever stood it?

How had she stood it? A feeling of sudden awakening came to Leota. Of course, all these years she had known that she was caged. But, until now, she had never realized how much she had suffered, how strong and hateful the bars had been. Now the door stood open. . . .

Leota added the shirts, conscientiously choosing Will's favourites. What a stupid fellow Will was, with his worrying over details! Will—even his name sounded hard, unromantic, sluggish. William Burrage Clifford—wasn't it fate to be married to a man with a name like that? No one even called him a compromising Bill or a playful Billy. Just Will. . . . Well, he was going away.

It had never occurred to Leota, until three days before, that there was a possibility of Will's ever going anywhere, a chance for her own freedom. Then, suddenly, a bounteous gift from the gods, he had announced this sudden trip, with an apology for its suddenness and because he must go alone.

"Someone had to go and start our London office moving smoothly. Had to be me, it seems—firm thinks I understand things pretty well. I'll get back

as soon as I can. I know it'll be lonesome for you. Maybe you can get your mother or Ida to come in to keep you company.

Leota had clutched desperately at this gleam of liberty, explaining that her mother, who lived in Rochester with her older sister, probably wouldn't care about taking a trip just then, and that Ida might not want to make new plans, either, after she'd got comfortably settled with Grace. Ida was Will's old-maid sister—wasn't it just like Will to have an old-maid sister?—a pleasant pert little thing, who was always sewing on something or preparing neat addresses for unnecessary club-meetings. Ida wore nose-glasses and looked intellectual. Ida said, "Do you really think so?" when she means "I don't think so at all." She dressed briskly in the morning and was always ready for an early walk, speaking about "the crisp morning air." Ida liked to brag about never wasting time—she was always skipping busily from one useless thing to another. She wore stiff shirtwaists and never had attractive dressing gowns or seemed to need them. She wore cotton lingerie. And Ida had been suggested to her as the person to keep her from being lonely.

"No," Leota had tried to keep her voice even, "I couldn't think of bothering Mother or Ida. Of course I'll be a little lonely and miss you a lot, but I'll manage to get along. It isn't as if we were strangers in New York. We've so many friends here. I'll look up some of the girls I used to know. And you know I'm on the publicity committee of the bazaar. That will take every minute of the time I can give it. With Katie and Freda sleeping here in the apartment, I won't even feel afraid. Just think—we haven't been separated a day since our marriage, have we? Don't you worry a bit about me, I'll get along—"

Will had had so many things on his mind he hadn't thought of objecting. Now he was sailing in the morning—six weeks—

Leota finished packing the trunk, counted the handkerchiefs, added half a dozen more for good measure—what ugly things men wore!—

How could she have stood it, so long? What if the trip hadn't come—if the years had gone on and she had grown old, caged—?

Nine years of being caged—!

CHAPTER II

LEOTA remembered the beginning of it—when she was married. At twenty-three, she had entered the cage gladly enough. Of course she hadn't known what it meant, then. She wondered if any girl ever did know. At twenty-three she had been eager to get away from home—a home which had offered little, where there had been three single girls. She hadn't been madly in love with Will Clifford, but she hadn't been exactly in love with anyone else. She had never really loved anyone else—except Jeddy. That was different. She couldn't marry Jeddy, of course. She'd known that. For Jeddy was even more ambitious than she had been. Jeddy, too, wanted money, position. Jeddy and she had been in love, in a way—very young love, nothing definite—dances together, a few remembered walks and drives, some talks, dear little memories, that was all. They had said a great deal about how much they cared, but nothing at all about a future together. Still, Jeddy had been a dear. He had had such attractive ways, quaint fancies, said things that Will could never have understood. Jeddy had read poems to her, odd things, bound in light blue paper covers.

She had married and Jeddy had married and they had attained a little of what they had wanted. She saw his name in the papers, occasionally—Joseph D. Hallidan. Jeddy had not become famous or rich, though his wife was related to rather well-known people and he moved in a circle slightly better, socially, than her own—one of those many climbing circles, each complete, selfish, pretentious, foundationless, the

members of one always endeavouring to step into the circle just above in money and pretence. No, Jeddy had not failed—and yet— Leota wondered if Jeddy ever thought of her. Here they both were, in New York—funny, she never saw him. She could have written him a note, any day, asking him to call—but that would have meant so many things, explanations, Will. Now, while the door was open—why not—it wasn't fair losing all of the lovely things in life—

Leota knew, now, that when she had married Will she had not understood, fully, about the cage of marriage. She had been glad enough to enter it. She remembered the night she had met Will. She had lived in Westmont and there were no marriageable men there. It had looked as if she would have to stay single for a long time. Will had been in Westmont on business and she had met him at a little party at the Robinsons'. He had been good-looking in a solid, square way. Even now she admitted to herself that she had used all of her little tricks on him, tricks accumulated from living in a family of girls, from meeting boys, socially, since she was seventeen. She had been poor and hated Westmont, and Will had had a fair business position with a New York firm. She had felt that Will was as good a catch as she would be able to find.

Six months later they were married and moved to New York. She had thought, then, that she would be free. She felt the bars of the cage just when she most desired to try her freedom. All of the things that she had longed to do when she was single and poor and that she had thought marriage would bring were just the things she couldn't do, married and with a little money.

Before her marriage, Leota had visited New York, occasionally, and had been eager to live there. She had looked into attractive shop windows and up strange, alluring streets, climbing innumerable stairs to the galleries of the theatres, envying the people who weren't poor.

Leota, married to Will and living in New York, wasn't so dreadfully poor. But things weren't as she had dreamed them. She found herself one-half of a little married couple, doing conventional, stupid, decent things. She was swallowed up in a middle-class set. Buying in shops, when you have to be careful about monthly bills and when it seems as if all your friends are spending more, had not proved any more entertaining than gazing in the shop-windows. The alluring little streets became commonplace, dusty by-ways or disappeared altogether. At the theatre, orchestra seats had not added to the brilliancy or sparkle of the performance. Married, daring epigrams became commonplace; risqué situations seemed stupid.

Will developed a jealousy and a regard for middle-class conventions that Leota had never thought him capable of, if she had thought of it at all—she really hadn't considered Will. It developed that there were things Will's wife could and couldn't do. She couldn't talk, very long, to any other man for one thing, or later Will would say something about "how funny it looked" or "you've got to be careful of appearances." Leota could never go anywhere, at night, without Will. Leota knew that there were sets—real society, not to mention Bohemian circles—where women dined with other men or lunched with them, where a wife could go about without the presence of her husband. But in Will and Leota Clifford's set these things did not exist.

Leota's days belonged pretty much to herself, though, of course, she was supposed to tell Will where she had been and what she had done and she was not supposed to see other men. Not that Will questioned her closely, but he was quite willing to tell where he had spent his absent hours and he expected equal frankness in reply. During the day Leota attended to her household duties, wasted time as she wished, joined the various feminine activities that were open to her.

In the evening Will came home at about six and dinner was served half an hour later. Or Leota met Will at his office or at an hotel and had dinner with him. Although he belonged to two clubs Will didn't care for them nor for going out with men. He was "a home body" and bragged of it. They went to the theatre frequently, and Will talked, heavily, of the acting and the plot, on the way home. Or they spent the evening with a few friends at dinners or informal dances or bridge.

Now it came to Leota with a terrible force that, not once during the whole nine years of her married life, had she had dinner one night without Will. When Will took his short yearly vacations they went, together, to near-by summer hotels or took hackneyed trips. They had had good times, of course, usual, middle-class times. But—always together, as if they had been bound. Why hadn't she rebelled before? How could she have stood it—all these years?

CHAPTER III

Leota knew that she had never yearned for a career. There had never been anything she really cared to do. She had painted a little, when a girl, daubs of china painting, spending tedious hours with a Westmont teacher, copying fruit and flowers on white plates, smearing in pale backgrounds, having the pieces fired, adding more details and gold bands for a second firing, polishing the gold with a glass brush. When china painting "went out" she had studied with another teacher, drawing still life in charcoal, collections of vases and bowls, onions and apples, tomatoes and jugs, against a background of seemingly carelessly-draped velvet. She had never taken this seriously, though she liked to think she had talent. She had taken piano lessons, too, for two years, thumping out scales and finger exercises and "first pieces" for an hour each day, glancing at the clock between notes. She had never tried anything else. Leota was lazy. She disliked every kind of work, anything that needed concentration. She hated the small amount of housework she had had to do at home in Westmont. Will had seemed especially desirable as a husband, then, because he had sufficient money to provide servants.

She now had a pleasant enough life, as far as that went. She had nice things—in a way—though she always envied women who had more. Her apartment was all right, she supposed. She knew she could have had a small house in the suburbs, instead—Will would have preferred it, he liked leading such a simple life—but she would have hated to have felt herself so far from the centre of things and living by a time-table. Leota had chosen all of the apartments they had occupied in New York—they had moved four times and each time to a more expensive apartment—except the first one. She still remembered the dreadful things Will had picked for furnishings. She had got rid of those, years ago. They had had this apartment for nearly two years. She liked it as much as she could like any apartment they could afford, though Will thought even the rent for this one was rather high. There was an attractive view of the park from the windows and it was near things, shops and the theatres. And it wasn't impossible socially—as long as you stay below the hundreds you are safe enough. Even the furniture suited—odd things, painted with lots of terra cotta and purple and green, and black draperies.

Leota remembered the decorator who had done the apartment. He was a part owner of a decorating shop in Madison Avenue, but Leota felt that he had taken more than a financial interest in her and her home, even if his prices had been rather high. She had had tea with him a couple of times, while they were discussing furnishings, and she had felt dreadfully wicked about it. He had asked her to go to a little studio party but she had had to decline—Will wouldn't have dreamed of allowing her to go out at night with another man

and Will hadn't been included in the invitation—and, if he had been, that would have spoiled everything. How badly Will would have fitted in with anything like that!

Allan Frederickson was the decorator's name, a charming fellow, with graceful mannerisms. He had understood—about the cage. Why, he had said something about it at the time, Leota remembered now. They were choosing wall paper—the apartment had been papered before, so they couldn't have painted walls—and Frederickson had decided on a golden grass-cloth—and had said something about "gilded bars." It was hateful to think she had been caged like this—and that people knew. She would write a note to Frederickson or drop in to see him—to show him—she didn't care anything about him, of course—still, it would be interesting—

There were other men, too—Claron Wilmott, Laurance Haines, Dr. Stanton—others— She'd never been able to know any of them, really. Claron Wilmott had asked her, so often, to go to places with him—of course she could never go. Wilmott was a bachelor—went with wonderful people—could do anything. And Laurance Haines—she had never known him very well, but whenever they met he would always say rather hard-to-understand things—he seemed mysterious, fascinating. He was married, too—but not caged the way she was. His wife was a faded little blonde with an inadequate turned-up nose, who dressed too girlishly. Of course she didn't understand him. Haines was a business man, but he had the soul of an artist and, just the year before, had exhibited half a dozen pastels at a private studio. He had explained to Leota about not being understood—now she could see him and talk to him.

And Dr. Stanton—why is it doctors seem peculiarly fascinating? Is it because you can tell them so much, because they seem to understand everything, life, so thoroughly? Leota was a bit afraid of Dr. Stanton. He was quite rich and his patients represented "real society." Leota was flattered because he noticed her at all, yet, whenever she saw him in a crowd, anywhere, he would stop, bend close, whisper a few words to her, squeeze her hand for an instant. Oh, there were so many worth while men who did things—and here she had been wasting her life, doing petty nothings, living stupid days—with Will. She had a chance, now—

All other women weren't caged, though most of them were. Some were free—like Roberta Miller. How Roberta must look down on her and laugh. She didn't blame Roberta, either. Roberta had come from Westmont, too, and they had had such good times, together, there. She had expected to see a lot of her in New York. But during the day Roberta was busy. Leota never quite understood what she did, but it had something to do with chemistry and analyzing things. It seemed dreadfully stupid, but Roberta was always an odd one for things like that. All day Roberta was in a terrible looking office, wearing a stained apron and cooking things in glass tubes—Leota had run in there, once, to take her to luncheon. Leota couldn't see much of Roberta at night. Occasionally she came out to dinner, but she and Will never had anything to talk about. Leota could see how uncomfortable they both were and how Roberta disapproved of all of Leota's middle-class things.

Roberta had a studio all to herself, a big room with a fireplace and a tiny bed-room and a wee kitchenette behind a screen. There she could have all the company she wanted, artists and writers and people who Thought. Roberta got a big salary and wore odd clothes and talked about the Independence of Women. But, most wonderful of all, Roberta had a Past. There had been a Man and Roberta wasn't married to him! Roberta scorned marriage as a humiliating and unnecessary experience, called a wedding ring "the sign of bondage," said all married people hated each other—and read things out of books to prove it. And Leota felt,

when she saw what a bore Will was and what a wonderful life Roberta led, that perhaps there was a lot in Roberta's theory. No wonder Roberta wasn't at home in Leota's up-town apartment. Leota understood perfectly—Roberta thought her a slave, more than likely. And wasn't she—?

Of course, some things were rather pleasant. Freda was a good cook—even Will had to admit she was the best cook they had ever had—Leota did love good things to eat. And Katie knew how to wait on the table nicely and keep things in order—not bad looking, either, quiet and quick. And Mrs. Brackett was good, too, always got through all of the washing and ironing and cleaning on Monday and Tuesday. It was really very comfortable, that way. Will didn't complain much about bills. He put Leota's money in the bank every month and increased it when she complained a great deal about the cost of things. Why shouldn't he? His salary was good. Leota felt that she did without clothes and dozens of other things that she wanted, and she was a good manager, careful, and did some of the ordering herself, stopping at the market on her way down town, lots of times—and she wasn't extravagant. Other women—why she and Will didn't even have a car—!

Leota didn't care about that. She had no interest in driving and felt you don't get much satisfaction out of a car, always out of commission or the chauffeur leaving. Will's arrangement was really quite sensible—some sort of a monthly thing—you telephoned and the garage sent out a fairly nice-looking car and a good chauffeur, usually, and you didn't have to bother about tyres or things like that. It wasn't a car or thinking a lot before ordering a new frock—it was big things—living, being free—

CHAPTER IV

Leota closed the trunk. She'd leave it unlocked, in case Will thought of something else when he came home.

She went into her own room, glanced at the pale green enamelled clock on her green painted chest of drawers. It was time to dress. Will would be home and they were going out to dinner—as they did several times a week, and then to the theatre—and in the morning Will was to sail.

Leota slipped out of her clothes, took a hasty shower bath and dressed slowly, calling Katie to get together the things she needed, fresh lingerie, her suit and hat. Katie wasn't as good as a personal maid, of course, but she was quick and handy and it annoyed Leota to hunt for the things she needed. She liked doing her own nails and hair—she could take a long time over them—but she liked, too, to find her clothes spread out, neatly, on the bed, waiting for her. Leota felt that Katie didn't work as hard as most maids—lots of time off. She'd had Katie for three years—oh, Katie knew a good job when she found one.

Leota adjusted her dress, looked at herself critically in the long mirror of her wardrobe door. She really wasn't bad looking, she felt—and didn't look her age, nearly. Her type was fortunate—some women do have such a hard time of it. Leota was just a trifle over medium height and looked slimmer than she was, with plump arms and neck and a slender waist. She had rather small feet, but her hands were fairly large and her wrists and ankles a trifle thick, though not noticeably out of proportion. Her face was oval and usually pale, though she added a little colour. Her eyebrows were nicely curved and she kept them slender and dark. Her eyes were rather a light brown, of a good size, and when she darkened the lids and corners were quite attractive and brilliant. Her hair was a smooth brown and she wore it rather tight, which made her head look nicely proportioned and small. Her nose was slender and slightly arched, her nostrils a bit long and narrow. Leota's mouth was rather full, especially her lower lip and in repose it turned down slightly at the corners. She always kept it very red. There was a slight tracing of lines

around her eyes and mouth and her skin was soft and smooth.

Looking in the mirror strengthened Leota's opinions—all her charm was wasted. Will liked her because he could show her off—his wife. What did he know of her—how attractive she was, how different from other women—this wife he had caged for nine years? Well, now the cage was going to be open—

Will came home at a quarter past six. A business conference had detained him for a few minutes. It was April, but the day had turned unusually warm and he was perspiring. He was a pleasant looking man, fairly tall, with square shoulders and rather a square shaped head. In his late thirties, his brown hair was still crisp and black, his moustache close-cropped but strong. Even after being shaved, his beard showed dark—he always gave the appearance of being well-fed, well-groomed, hairy. His skin was unexpectedly fair and he usually had a little colour around his rather prominent cheek-bones. The backs of his hands were hair-covered to the knuckles, and his hands were big, capable-looking, rather white, with thick, square fingers.

He let himself into the apartment with his key, looked into the living room for his wife, then went to the door of her bed-room.

"Leota," he called, pleasantly.

Leota, dressed in sleek black satin, opened the door for him and gave him a hearty kiss.

"Hullo, how's everything," she asked, "All ready to go? My, but I'm going to miss you," and she didn't feel deceitful as she said it. She was really fond of Will, in a way—Will was good. Of course she'd miss him—how can you help missing anyone you've seen every day for nine years?

"All ready."

Will took off his light overcoat and his hat and laid them on his wife's bed, and wiped his face with his handkerchief.

"Getting awfully warm. Walked fast from the subway so that you wouldn't worry about my being late. Had to stay to see Cushing about some reports. Got everything ready now. Trunk packed? They'll call for it tonight. You'd better tell Katie."

"It's in your room. I think I've put everything in."

"Sure you have, sure it's fine."

He patted her on the shoulder.

Leota moved away slightly and shrugged. Will was so warm, heavy.

He examined the contents at the top of the trunk, added a packet of papers, called "Thanks, thanks, this is fine," as he closed it.

Leota put on her hat, seated at her green dressing table. It was rather a large, flat hat, of thin black material, with a small glittering ornament in front. She wore it far over her face and tilted a bit to the right and she carried her head rather high. Leota liked large, flat hats, and wore them nearly always. She usually carried, too, the collection of little glittering toilet things she picked up now—a small puff box, a lip stick in a case, a pencil that could do double duty for eyebrows or shopping notes.

Will telephoned to the garage he patronized for a car. Leota didn't mind the subway or the buses or even surface cars in the daytime, but she did object to them after dark or when she was with Will or when she had on nice clothes. While they waited, she strummed on the upright piano that stood in the small music room which opened its double French doors into the living room and where stood, too, a small bookcase, half full of books and magazines. Leota played a popular piece, rather poorly, by note, humming unevenly, while Will jotted down some things on paper. Will didn't like the way Leota played or sang. Sometimes he said so. To-night the occasion was rather a momentous one, so he said nothing.

They talked little as they drove to the restaurant, Leota asking several times how Will felt and did he think he'd be seasick and saying how she, herself, would dread an ocean trip. They had

been to Porto Rico several years before and Leota had spent several dreadful days of seasickness. She told Will to be especially careful about his health and to put on the heavier underwear if the weather grew colder. Visibly touched by her interest, Will told her not to bother about him, he'd be all right, he'd take good care of himself. He told boring business details about what Crowell and Cushing had said.

They went to a restaurant where they frequently dined, which, in their set, was noted for its food and service. An orchestra was playing. The lights and the gilt decorations were a bit gaudy, but the small tables were nearly all occupied.

As they entered, it came to Leota again that she never had liked the way Will entered restaurants. There was never enough force or personality about him. He entered meekly, as if afraid, and then stood, undetermined, until a head waiter rescued him. Even then, he followed mildly, accepting the designated table. Some men, Leota noticed, entered restaurants as if they owned them, sweeping the menials aside, securing the most desirable tables. She felt that with her looks and personality she deserved a man who had spirit, forcefulness, who appeared to be a man of importance, who knew how to press a bill, skilfully, into the hand of a head waiter.

The evening progressed as evenings usually did when Leota and Will dined out. It was better than dining at home, alone, anyhow—at home, after a too-heavy dinner, during which Leota tried to make the conversation interesting and never succeeded in raising it above the heaviest commonplaces, silences broken only by the sounds of the clinking of knife against plate, ice against glass, then several hours of reading, of picking up and putting down various newspapers, magazines, and books. Finally, one or both of them would fall asleep. Will in the big, black velour-covered fireside chair, Leota stretched on the terra-cotta-coloured damask couch, clad in a becoming tea-gown, satin-slippered, in case anyone should happen in. Usually Will said, "Might as well go to bed," and a half hour of splashing in the bath-tub would follow, while Leota rubbed cold cream into her skin, always stroking carefully upward—she thought it would make her look younger—then vaselined her eyebrows and eyelashes. Leota and Will had separate bedrooms, but they shared the same bath, although a guest room, with its adjoining bath, lay farther down the hall and was seldom used, for they had few house-guests. Leota knew, too, that dining alone with Will was just about as much fun as if some of their friends were with them—there were always the same people, the same uninspiring, stupid chatter.

Now, in the restaurant, Will had to order dinner, a task spared him at home. Leota disliked Will's method of ordering. He picked up the card and studied it carefully, as if he had never seen one before, paying a due amount of attention to the prices. He leaned toward the waiter and asked such questions as "How is this?" and "Is the roast lamb good to-night?" The usual, "Very good, sir," even after a score of years, seemed to Will considerate and satisfactory, and he usually ordered the food he inquired about.

Leota knew that there were men who knew how to order a dinner, who didn't need cards at all, who gave directions to waiters and paid attention when platters were held before them—oh, not men who mixed their own salads at the table and knew but one salad dressing, but real men, to whom good dining was important. Well, soon she'd find men like that—

CHAPTER V

WILL chose the dinner slowly, ponderously, even pointing to an item with a thick, white finger.

The food was good and Leota had a large appetite, as usual. She and Will spoke very little, and save that they talked of Will's trip it might have been any one of a hundred dinners they had

had together. After dinner Will looked over his bill carefully and gave the waiter a moderate and usual tip. He stood by while the waiter held Leota's coat for her. Leota remembered Jeddy, how he always took her coat from the waiter and said, very low to her, "I don't want anyone else this near my girl."

Will didn't know things like that. Jeddy—was he still dear, gentle? Now, why now—she could see Jeddy again—

They went to a musical comedy, the kind Will liked best—two comedians. The wit of one consisted of mispronounced words, that of the other of odd costumes and falls. There were also a dear little ingénue, who could dance but not sing; a dear little juvenile, who could neither sing nor dance, but who knew how to toss back his hair—the two sang dear little songs that were already popular on the Victrola—a chorus of eighteen, mouths too large, eyes too much made up, curls, scenery in splashes of green and orange, by a new scenic artist who had just discovered the real art in scenic production—the usual musical comedy, called, in this instance, "I'll Say It Is."

After the theatre they went for a bite to eat at one of the more glittering roof gardens. This was an expensive treat, a fitting farewell for Will. Here they watched the same two comedians they had seen in "I'll Say It Is," two dancers whom they had seen in another musical comedy the week before, and well-known chorus girls who managed to get their faces and names into every Sunday supplement and many scandals. There were souvenirs of balloons painted to represent ears of corn for the song, "Corn Husking Time," candy "kisses" for "One Kiss More" and tops and marbles for the "We're Boys and Girls Again" number. These, thrown by the chorus girls, were worth a couple of cents each and Leota was amused, as always, to observe Will's evident eagerness to secure these souvenirs or a smile from the girls who approached their table. This time the stage was red and purple, the work of a just-discovered scenic painter, one Monsieur Leopold, who knew the last word in stage art. Leota liked to watch the audience—she felt she was clever at character reading and could tell which people were New Yorkers and which from out-of-town.' She liked to make up little stories about them, to pick out those she thought she recognized from published photographs or whom she felt were rich and prominent—whom she wished she knew.

They got home shortly after one. The trunk had been called for. They undressed hurriedly, for Will wanted "a good night's sleep," though he had nothing to do but rest on the trip across.

Katie knocked on Leota's door, as usual, in the morning. It was raining and a cold wind came in the open window. Leota heard Will moving around, so, slipping into a rose negligée, she went into his room.

"You won't mind if I don't go down with you?" she asked. "I did want to see you off, but it's a dreadful day and I'm so afraid of getting another cold."

"Of course I wouldn't hear of you going." Will, already bathed, was buttoning his shirt. "Don't think of it. Go back to bed. Might as well take it easy while I'm away."

Of course she wouldn't think of going back to bed—the idea—Will's last morning here! She washed hurriedly and joined him in the dining-room.

The breakfast passed, as their breakfasts always passed, Will munching heartily as he read his *Times*, Leota glancing at the *Herald* carelessly, eating a bit of toast. She never had much appetite at breakfast, thought the whole thing a bore, but came to the table because it was one of the "wifely" little things Will liked.

Will, as usual, glanced at his watch two or three times during the meal. He got up finally, taking his paper with him and in the hall stuffed it into his overcoat pocket.

Leota was rather touched at his leaving. After all, crossing the ocean is always dangerous—six weeks is a long time, anything might happen. She put

her arms around him, the silk sleeves of her dressing-gown falling back. She happened to glance at her arm, smooth and white, a bit of the flesh-coloured crêpe de chine of her dressing gown against it—Will didn't appreciate her, he never even noticed—

Will kissed her heartily, unconsciously wiping his moustache on the back of his hand.

"There, there," he said. "Be a good girl while I'm gone. Try not to get lonesome. I'll be back as soon as I can. Good-bye."

The door closed. She was alone, free!

CHAPTER VI

LEOTA spent the morning much as she spent her other unengaged mornings, wasting time with pleasant musings. But there was a feeling of elation, of abandon that she had never experienced before. She loved it. She stretched out her arms, pleasantly, as she stood at the window. Even the rain didn't bother her—what was one lost day with six weeks of freedom! It would be splendid not to have to dress. Even the days she didn't go out Leota felt she must be dressed when Will came home. During the day, too, she usually tried to look presentable, in case someone "happened in." She never knew who the someone might be—she had few unexpected callers—but she liked, always, to anticipate surprise.

Leota bathed slowly, using very warm water, and then spent an hour over her toilet, paying especial attention to the ovals of her nails, her eyebrows, going close to the window and pulling out a stray hair or two, using miniature tweezers. She put on her best dressing-gown, of orchid meteor, trimmed with bands of white swansdown. She always kept it in the closet with her evening things, carefully swathed in white. It had long, loose sleeves, weighed down with big tassels. Leota wanted an Italian house-gown of blue velvet, trimmed with dull gold, but she could never afford it, and, though she felt it was made for her—little fat women can't wear those things—spending a couple of hundred dollars on a gown no one would ever see—but Will—was not Leota's idea of luxury.

She telephoned to her favourite confectioner and ordered, to be sent out at once, a five-pound box of expensive chocolates with rich cream centres, of which she was especially fond. She lay on the couch, then, and read a novel she had started the day before, musing pleasantly between paragraphs.

She ate a salad for luncheon, and, when the candy was delivered in the afternoon, ate over a pound of it.

Late in the afternoon she telephoned to Aline Buell, one of her best friends, gossiping for half an hour.

It was splendid—being alone—not having to invent conversation at dinner—being able to do what she really wanted—

At six, unconsciously, she found herself glancing at the clock and wondering when Will would be home. How stupid—that's what habit had done for her! A little, watching wife! She'd get over that in a day or two!

Dinner seemed rather a lonely meal. Will always brought home tales of the office, of the outside world, stupid things, but alive with commercialism, activity. Dinner was good, though. Leota had told Freda to prepare a number of dishes Will didn't like, a salad with a rich Russian dressing, fruit pudding with a heavy, thick cream sauce.

After dinner was pleasant enough. Leota trailed the orchid dressing gown into the living room—she liked the effect of it against the terra-cotta coloured rug and the black draperies. She played in her usual uncertain way, and sang some sentimental things she remembered from her girlhood, "Spring Rain," "The Gypsy Trail" and a song that started "Sometimes between long shadows on the grass," the name of which she had forgotten. It wasn't too late—at thirty-two—for love and life—

Leota woke up late the next morning and had Katie bring her breakfast to her bed. Leota didn't really enjoy eat-

ing in bed, for she liked to bathe before she ate—and, after a bath, what's the use of getting back into bed again? Besides, her tray was too small to hold the needed breakfast things and tilted easily. It was of wicker, with a glass top, and had pockets for letters at either side—one of Will's attempts to buy her a luxury. Leota munched toast contentedly enough, though, for eating in bed represented a triumph of doing what she wanted to.

She was sorry there weren't more letters. Reading letters in bed seemed so much a part of the luxury of breakfasting there. There was a note from the chairman of the publicity committee of the bazaar appointing Thursday as the day for a meeting, a luncheon invitation from Irene Sears for the following Wednesday "to meet Mrs. Updyke." She didn't like Mrs. Sears, she had never heard of Mrs. Updyke, she was tired of women, anyhow!

She got up about eleven. The weather was clearing. At her desk she wrote several notes in her large, vertical, angular writing on her light tan paper with "L F C" in an elongated monogram in green—she had always regretted that neither her family nor Will's had a coat-of-arms. Only fear of committing some error kept her from appropriating one.

The notes were necessary ones—to out-of-town relatives, mostly. Then she took the first step in leaving the cage—she wrote to Claron Wilmott! Of course Wilmott was a bachelor and popular—he received many invitations. Still, hers— She wrote that Will had gone to England and asked him "to help cheer her up" during his absence, unconsciously lapsing into the intense phraseology of her girlhood. During her married life her notes had been stilted, conventional, as if Will were looking over her shoulder. She often asked him to read the letters she had written, "to see if they would do," and Will disliked all written expressions of emotion. She wrote, then, to a young chap she knew, Howard Denning. She had met him at dinners, during the last few years, and he had, well, made love to her—in public and quite discreetly, of course, little nods and smiles and flatteries. It might be pleasant to see him.

Then—why not? She could write to Jeddy if she wanted to. She tore up half a dozen sheets of paper, getting the letter started. Then she remembered she had seen his name in a newspaper just a few days before. She wrote, finally:

Wednesday.

Dear Jeddy:

Only yesterday your name flashed to me in one of the newspapers. You knew I was here in New York? Won't you drop in to tea, one day soon, to take up some of the broken threads in a friendship that has always remained very dear to me?

As always,
Leota French Clifford.

She hoped it sounded cryptic, alluring.

She telephoned then to Laurance Haines, at his office. It didn't seem right, sending a note to a married man. Why, he might even show it to his wife and she would laugh at it—Leota knew how women were.

Leota was quite nervous when she heard Haines' voice over the telephone. She felt as if she were doing a devilish, unheard-of thing.

Haines seemed quite pleasant, undisturbed. So, Will Clifford was in England! Indeed, he would come and cheer her up—never had a more pleasant task been assigned to him. What about going to dinner with him, instead? He was lonesome, too. Yes, Mrs. Haines was visiting her mother. How nicely the two departures fitted in! This was Wednesday—how about Friday night? Fine—he'd call a little before seven.

She had a dinner engagement—with a married man! The cage door had opened. This was freedom, indeed!

In the afternoon, Leota had an engagement with Mrs. Hill, a pretty little blonde whom she had known for several years. They spent a couple of

hours shopping and then went to an exhibition of etchings Mrs. Hill had heard discussed. Leota didn't "see much in them," but tried to talk about etchings as she looked at them. It was a usual afternoon, but the thought that she didn't have to be home to dinner in time—or at all—that anything might happen—the engagement she had made, the notes she had written—made it all seem wonderfully pleasant.

Mrs. Hill persuaded Leota to come home with her to dinner—no use eating alone. No, there wouldn't be any other company, just she and Jack. The children could eat with the family, too.

Leota liked children only occasionally, they were so messy and tugged so at one's clothes—she never knew what to say or do to them, but Billie and Margaret Hill were plump and blond and pleasant. It wasn't exciting, but there was nothing else to do just then. She telephoned Katie to tell Freda not to prepare dinner for her.

Leota got home at ten. Jack Hill took her home, and even this slight deviation from the other dinners at the Hills', when she and Will had gone home together, was pleasant. Leota found herself smiling, personally, at Jack, as if he were a real man, not just a husband. When his wife wasn't along he was quite a jolly, talkative fellow. Of course he was too conventional—satisfied with living as he did—the way Will did—coming home to dinner every day. That wasn't life.

The next afternoon Leota went to the charity bazaar committee meeting. She got up late, spent several hours of the morning over her toilet and the meeting was tiresome, lasted the whole afternoon. She brought Virginia Allen home to dinner with her.

Will didn't like Mrs. Allen. He thought she talked too much and disapproved of her actions and because she was divorced—the divorce having been accompanied by publicity not at all favourable to Mrs. Allen. Leota always wished she knew her better—had felt that this big woman who laughed at public opinion and still kept her own position must really be worth knowing, charming, if you got beneath the surface.

So, at dinner, Leota tried to show to Mrs. Allen how fully in sympathy she was, how dissatisfied she, too, was with the conventional humdrum life she had to lead—that she, too, longed for freedom.

But Mrs. Allen refused to open her soul. Even after dinner, as they drank their coffee in the gold-coloured light of the living-room, Mrs. Allen refused to accept Leota as one of the free, refused to give more than correct, conventional platitudes about life.

Finally, Leota learned the truth. Virginia Allen had had a change of heart. She was no longer a defier of convention. On the contrary, she was planning a series of conventional acts and entertainments which would take her back into the graces of the disapproving. She was to wed a certain Mr. Montrose, it seemed, and, as Mrs. Montrose, she hoped to occupy an important and secure position in society. She had accepted Leota's invitation to dinner because Leota represented conventionality. Now she was almost afraid of Leota's ideas. Her conversation was heavily correct, stolidly domestic. Leota was dreadfully bored.

CHAPTER VII

On Friday mornings, Leota attended a series of musicales at one of the larger hotels. These were conducted by a tall, meagre-looking woman, who spent an hour of each morning talking on a musical topic, referring frequently to her notes, hesitating, repeating. After the lecture singers or pianists would give selections from the composer or opera under discussion. Leota felt that it was a nice thing to attend—she was able to keep up with things, have a real understanding of music—meet really nice people, too. This Friday she dressed languidly. At first she couldn't decide to go at all. Still, there was

nothing else to do. She chatted pleasantly with Katie as she dressed.

Just before she left and sooner than she had dared expect them, the postman brought two letters. She opened them nervously. Claron Wilmott and Howard Denning had both written to her—Wilmott asked to be allowed to call the coming Monday evening, Denning assured her of the pleasure the note had brought him and said he would drop in to tea in the near future. Notes from two men and a dinner this very evening with a third! Leota tossed her head in a spirit of deviltry and added a bit more rouge to her lips. This was living! Perhaps, even, something would happen this morning—a musician who was to play might be famous and handsome—might find her eyes in the crowd, ask to meet her—

The lecture was on old English ballads. They were sung by a group of fat women who looked just alike, with red faces and quivering chins.

Leota had luncheon at Mary Elizabeth's with Mrs. Buell, who also attended the musicales. She hurried home, rather early, to prepare for the dinner engagement.

At home she undressed rapidly and tried to take a nap, so that she would look fresh and rested, but she couldn't go to sleep. She lay on her green enamelled bed, musing of this evening, of other evenings, of things she might do. Of course she really wouldn't be—exactly untrue to Will—that wouldn't be fair—still, there were thousands of things—she could have delightful times—the whole world lay before her to be unfolded—

She took a long slow bath, adding unusual quantities of her favourite toilet water, lathering herself unnecessarily with the oriental scented bath soap she always used. She dried herself slowly, examining her smooth skin, fixed her nails, massaged, powdered, darkened her lashes and brows, reddened her lips and cheeks, spent half an hour brushing her hair, admiring her face, front view and profile, in the mirrors of her dressing table.

She put on one of her favourite gowns, black and green shimmering satin, cut rather low, and very plain. She was dressed half an hour too soon and spent the time at the piano.

Katie answered the door. Leota stood, quietly, near the piano, as Haines entered. She knew the gold of the grass-cloth made a good background for her.

"This is good of you," Haines said, quite low, as he came toward her. He took her hand and held it unnecessarily long. How lonely he had been!—how she had saved his life! His wife hadn't been well and now she had gone away for her health and no one would take pity on him and then he had received the charming little note—

Leota was quite thrilled. This was wicked—forbidden—to entertain, all alone, a married man, go to dinner with him—

"We'd better go out and eat," said Haines. "I'm hungry as a bear."

The expression somewhat shocked Leota. It was one Will used frequently and she had always disliked it, so commonplace. Surely Haines could have been more interested in her—still, it was dinner time—men were alike when they were hungry.

She put on her hat and coat and they went down in the elevator. She had thought that of course Haines would have a car, but there was none waiting. She hesitated just a moment at the door but he took her arm, which annoyed Leota, though she liked to dream of someone holding her arm, very closely, late at night. Haines led Leota to the nearby subway entrance. He neither apologized nor explained—evidently he thought it quite all right. She couldn't tell him that she hated subways, except occasionally in the day time, that she never rode in them with Will. There were no seats. She had to stand, people pressing against her, hardly able to keep on her feet, and she had worn thin satin evening slippers.

They got off at Times Square. Haines mentioned a restaurant he had decided on, as if, in choosing it, he had

shown marked originality. Leota did not raise an objection to his choice. The restaurant was one of Will's favourites, where she and Will had dined the last night Will was at home.

In the restaurant Haines waited, hesitatingly, until the waiter piloted him to a seat. He let the waiter take care of Leota's coat. Then, when they were seated, he fumbled, hesitated over the menu just as Will would have done. Leota wanted to grab the card out of his hand, shake him. What was the use?

She looked at Haines critically as he ordered, as he consulted the waiter and found that "the fillet of sole is very good to-night, sir," while he consulted her in regard to vegetables, ignoring a salad, pointing a red finger at an especially interesting item.

Why, Haines wasn't as good looking nor as distinguished as Will, even. Of course he was probably more fascinating, always taking women out to dinners, being misunderstood, all that. But his face was unpleasantly big and shiny and red and he wasn't "finished" about things any more than Will was.

Will would have ordered just the same dinner, plus the missing salad—Leota loved salads. The music was the same.

"What are they playing? It sounds familiar, but I don't seem to remember the name of it," Haines asked. Will would have asked that, too.

But the dinner was good. Leota ate heartily.

Haines began to talk about himself, his artistic ambitions, his wife. His wife—didn't understand. They had been childhood sweethearts, grew up together. He had gone away to school, then into the world, changed, grown. She had remained the same, a nice little small-town girl. He had seen how things were, but she hadn't. He had been in honour bound—what could he do? So he had married her and they had drifted farther and farther apart. He was forced to keep in the rut of commercial things because his wife was extravagant—she used all he could produce, but his soul called out for other things. His art—that was what counted, that and his friends—at least he was allowed those—and nod—Mrs. Clifford.

His voice grew tender, low.

Leota had expected to be thrilled by Haines. She had heard other women describe him as fascinating. She felt that the things he was saying should have thrilled her. They left her curiously cold. She felt a sympathy for Mrs. Haines, such an indefinite, mouse-like little thing, always pleasant and smiling. Why, she knew Mrs. Haines wasn't extravagant; she wore cheap ready-made frocks Leota wouldn't have worn. Being left at home while your husband talked about art and took other women out to dinner—she was out of town, now, but Haines took other women to places even when she wasn't. Of course Will was a dreadful bore, but, if he did such things—

Haines tipped the waiter rather a smallish amount, Leota noticed, and he let the waiter adjust her coat.

Haines had tickets for the theatre—a musical comedy that Leota had not seen. It resembled dozens she had seen in every single particular. The pièce de résistance of this particular opera was a song, "Cat, Cat, Cat," eight members of the chorus carrying live kittens. Haines thought this number "great" and hummed the music between the acts.

After the theatre, Haines suggested, with a great show of inspiration, that they should go to a well-known roof garden, similar to the one Will and Leota had attended on Monday. Leota had been there frequently, but she had not seen the newest *revue*. She liked roof-gardens, the colour, the people, the smell of food and drink, tobacco and perfume. She had hoped that someone would see her and notice that she was not with her husband, but it seemed to her that Haines was rather afraid of recognition. He asked, rather nervously, "Is that tall fellow John Fredericks?" Was it possible, in spite of his talk about his rights, that Haines was afraid of gossip and Mrs. Haines?

Haines was interested in the performance and, when the chorus girls, dressed as drummer boys, gave miniature drums to a favoured few, he did all he could to attract attention to himself. He had to content himself with a pair of drumsticks and spent the rest of the evening keeping time by banging them on the table or applauding with them. Will couldn't have behaved more fatuously.

Leota noticed, too, that, as Haines drank, he moved closer to her and she had to grab her hand away to keep him from holding it under the table. He grew even more confidential, telling her how fine she was, how he knew she was misunderstood, what a shame it was that wives and husbands made such mistakes when they chose their mates. "Fate—that's what it is—fate. Deed is done. You can't undo it—circumstances—you've just got to suffer, suffer, suffer, in silence—in silence."

In the taxi on the way home, Haines sat very close to Leota and told her what a wonderful little woman she was. If he had not used the phrase "wonderful little woman" Leota might have liked his praises better. It was the phrase that fell easiest from Will's lips when he wanted to say something nice. Haines was not even as clever as Will. Why, Haines was not even sincere.

Leota had a key with her—it had seemed so foolish to disturb Katie or Freda. Besides—she had hoped to be in a mood where Katie would have been an intrusion.

Haines opened the door and went with Leota into the private hallway of the apartment. Almost before she was aware of it he had put his arms around her and was kissing her. Leota felt his moist, fat cheek, his thick lips. She pulled away rather ungracefully.

"What do you mean?" she said, "what do you mean?" The phrases sounded stupid, meaningless enough. She couldn't think of anything else. Did he think because she had allowed him to take her to dinner—to the theatre—

"No harm meant," Haines said. "Thought you were a good fellow, understand me. You wrote me a note, didn't you, asking me to cheer you up and all? And now you get sore. Remind me of my wife. You never can tell what will please a woman."

He stood there entirely unabashed, a bit puzzled by Leota's actions, but quite sure that his course had been the usual, expected one. He'd taken her to dinner, hadn't he? Spent money for food and the theatre and a roof show—not to mention a taxi home. And now, because he tried to kiss her—

He straightened up with an attempt at dignity and said a stiff good-bye.

CHAPTER VIII

LEOTA cried herself to sleep. That stupid fellow, Haines! If Will had been here—he'd have told him a few things. Haines, with a dear little wife, acting that way the first time he was alone with another woman! And the things he'd said about his wife—awfully disloyal! At least, no matter what she thought, she never said things like that about Will. Such a stupid evening—might as well—or better—have been spent with Will. Of course, it was because Haines was married. She was through with married men. They were probably all alike. But, imagine Haines taking her out—one evening—and wanting kisses in payment. Still, there were other men—a world full of them.

The next morning Leota went down town. While she was buying some gloves at Altman's, she remembered that just a few blocks away was Allan Frederickson's decorating shop. She'd go in and see him, just a little chat. He'd suggested, so often, that she drop in, go to places with him. Frederickson was a dear, a gentleman.

Frederickson and Oakley's "Shop of The Periods" was in Madison Avenue. It occupied the third and fourth stories of an old brownstone front house. Down stairs, a well-known corsetière held forth, her pink offerings flirting

with the Italian colours displayed in the upper windows.

Leota ran up the narrow stairs. A girl, with severely parted hair, wearing a purple and orange batik smock, received her, telling her Frederickson would be in soon. She spent the time, after looking into a mirror to be sure her hair and face were smoothly presentable, examining the furniture that stood around, highly coloured reproductions, mostly of French and Italian things. She turned as she heard Frederickson's voice.

"This is a real treat, I assure you. And what can I do for you, my dear Mrs. Clifford?"

Frederickson had been born in Iowa, but his affected, high voice and his extreme English accent gave no clue to his native state. He walked with a bit of a spring and was always gesturing with long, slender fingers. He had a real love and understanding of beautiful things, of colour, a "feel" for antiques, but this was overshadowed by a commercialism and shoppiness that were always in sight when there was any chance to make money. He was quite a snob, too, and liked the intimacies with "the best people" that his trade afforded him. He delighted in talking about various society leaders he had met and of having teas and dinners with them, but he was not above any friendship that could help his decorating shop. His intimate friends were usually decorators and artists and he preferred those who were rising, who might help him.

Leota shook hands with him.

"I was so bored and I remembered what fascinating things you always have here so I thought I'd run in and see you."

"I'm awful glad you did. Have you see this dear little chair? You'll love it. The little enamelled knobs go wonderfully with your rug, don't they? How is your home? You do care for it as much as ever?"

Leota said that the apartment was still satisfactory, that she'd think about the chair. Then—

"Why don't you come in some day for tea and see for yourself?"

"I'd love that. May I really come? You've always been such an inaccessible person. I remember you refused to go to a real tea party with me."

"That was different. Mr. Clifford was at home. You see, he's in England now on business and I—"

"Then you could go with me now?"

"It would be awfully nice."

Leota, when with Frederickson, adapted his speech, his rising inflections, supercilious expressions, English accent. Now, her "awfully nice" was as artificially toned as Frederickson's own speeches.

A tea, it seemed, was to be given by Hartwell Miles in his studio in Gramercy Park. Miles was a sculptor and had just finished a head of Frederick J. Ray, the Western banker. The tea was to exhibit the head and Mr. and Mrs. Ray were to be there and perhaps a dozen other wealthy patrons of the arts, whom Miles had his eyes on. But there would be some real people there, too, not the fakers or half-starved failures of the Village, but real artists, successes, another decorator or two, a painter who'd just returned from France, a well-known poet who had just published his third volume of verse and was nearly making expenses.

Leota listened interestedly. It was just what she wanted—to meet people who were really doing things. Of course she'd go. To-morrow at four, then—

She left the shop and hurried home, though there was no reason for hurrying. To-morrow a tea with Frederickson, on Monday Claron Wilmott was coming to call—a wonderful time—a real deliverance from boredom, convention.

But now it was Saturday and Leota felt that there ought to be something special to do. She knew it was awfully middle-class, parties on Saturday night, but when Will was home there was always something—he could sleep late on Sunday, so he liked to go out Saturday nights — usually two or three couples

went to the theatre with supper afterwards. Of course that was stupid—still, it was something. Now no one invited Leota to go anywhere. She rang up half a dozen of her women friends, to tell them that Will was away, to gossip, hoping they would include her in some pleasant party. No one did. Of course, after she got started there would be a lot of invitations—the people who mattered just didn't know that she was free.

There were places she could go to alone—free people did that—it would be rather splendid going alone—not being tied to a stupid, masculine escort. In Greenwich Village you can go to a restaurant alone and all kinds of fascinating, famous people talk to you and you talk to them and everyone gets acquainted and smokes. Leota had heard all about that. She had gone to the Village but always in groups of four or six, "slumming" as her crowd expressed it. She knew that her group had always stamped itself at once with the terrible curse of being "uptowners." Still, everyone else, with the exception of a very occasional greasy, heavy-eyebrowed man and short haired girl in a dirty smock, had stared and been well dressed, too. Well, after she found out about things, she would go alone to where artists and musicians and writers gathered, would mingle freely, hear clever, scintillating conversation, make genuine, unhampered friendships.

Leota telephoned to Roberta Miller. Roberta was so sorry, but she was just getting ready to fly to a Spring week-end house-party some friends were giving in a shack in New Jersey. If she'd only known a day sooner, she might have been able to include Leota! She was afraid it was rather impossible, now. Glad to hear Leota was free to go to places, to breathe for herself. Monday? Oh, if Leota had an engagement—and she'd be busy Tuesday and Wednesday. What about Saturday—a week from to-day? Leota had better plan to stay all night—awful bother going home late, so far up town. They'd have dinner and then find something interesting—always something going on, and then Leota could have breakfast with her on Sunday and maybe go to some place on Sunday, too. All right, around six, then, a week from to-night.

Leota wasted the rest of the day as she always wasted her time, reading a few pages of a book she had picked up down town—she had heard it had some exciting society scenes in it—playing the piano. She went for a short walk late in the afternoon, eyeing every man she passed with a new interest. She saw no one she knew nor who attracted her. She ate dinner alone. It was rather lonely. Of course, later—

She spent the evening as she spent the afternoon, restless, dissatisfied. She really didn't miss Will—it wasn't that—it was splendid being free. But things ought to happen. Jeddy hadn't answered her note. Of course it was quite possible he was out of town or the note had been delayed—she had sent it to the business address she had found in the telephone book. She hadn't heard from Denning again. It wasn't as if she had written to men who weren't interested in her. These men had been. If she only knew more men—the right kind. The rest of the men she knew were so stupid, heavy—worse than Will.

CHAPTER IX

FREDERICKSON called promptly at four, on Sunday. Leota had put on her most artistic afternoon gown, one she was sure he would admire. It was tan, with an embroidery of coloured wools and wooden beads. Frederickson did like it and said so.

"You're quite exquisite that way. I see you are living up to the colour-scheme I planned for you. You are quite perfect against that gold background. Women like you, with brown eyes and hair and fair skins, ought always to go in for green and gold and terra cotta. You still like the way I did your apartment?"

"Quite a lot."

"Awfully glad. It *is* good. This chair ought to go nearer the lamp, so—"

Frederickson rearranged a chair or two, tossed cushions about, patted one, decided that an embroidered affair was "impossible" and must be put away, immediately. His long, white fingers arranged the things on the table, the few books, the framed photograph.

"Did you see those new candlesticks when you were in, Saturday. I'm so sorry I didn't call your attention to them. You ought to have a pair with black candles in them, right here. Awful nice, polychromed, lovely colours. And some new book-ends to go with them. These are awful—hide them away at once—worse than Victorian."

They walked for half an hour, then climbed on a bus. The weather was fine, sunny, with a fresh, pleasant Spring breeze.

Leota liked Frederickson. She didn't know exactly what to say to him, he cared about so few things and she was afraid that her conversation would show her terrible lack of knowledge about decoration—she had read Frank Alvah Parsons and a couple of chapters in R. Davis Benn's "Style in Furniture," but had given it up when it got to be a little hard to understand. She could impress her friends with her knowledge but didn't known enough to talk with a real decorator. She listened attentively when Frederickson told of a home he was doing on Long Island, rather ordinary people, really, whom he had to fight with, before they'd let him use anything good.

Leota remembered, then, how difficult to talk with Frederickson had always been. Decoration seemed to be the only thing he knew or cared anything about. If you let him talk about his interests it was rather confusing and a dreadful bore, if you talked about what interested you he didn't seem to hear at all. Then, too, the knowledge came to Leota that there really wasn't anything she was interested in—or knew anything about. Even if there had been—

Her feet hurt. She had stumbled, Frederickson had taken such long steps. She knew she oughtn't to wear French heels for walking, but sensible shoes are so ugly looking—she didn't know anything about Gothic Art of the fourteenth century—

Hartwell Miles' studio was on the top floor of what Frederickson called "a lovely old home" which had been "done over awfully well," a few years before, into studios and apartments. Miles' studio extended across the front of the house, with the living rooms in the rear. The studio was a big, high-ceilinged room, with an immense skylight across the front and part of the roof. The walls were painted a light putty colour and there was a big fireplace, pleasantly ablaze, though the day did not especially call for it. But Leota knew the value artistic people put on fireplaces. The walls were nearly bare. On one side an artist had sketched a huge head in charcoal, on another side were several smaller things, done in colour on the wall. There were a few framed things, too, bright landscapes done in oil. The furniture consisted of several couches, velour covered, several Italian chairs, two of the favourite Dante model, and two hour-glass chairs. There was a rather handsome oriental rug in reds on the floor and a long Italian table stood near one wall. In the centre of the room was a small stand bearing the bust of a man. Four smaller stands stood around the room. On a sixth stand was a group of odd-looking pottery, in reds and purples, with an uneven glaze.

Frederickson did not ring. He opened the door. The room seemed very full of people to Leota, though later she found there were not over twenty. As many more came in during the next half hour. Frederickson called, "I say, Miles," in a high, affected voice.

Their host came toward them. He was a slender little fellow with heavy reddish eyebrows and a soft looking, pointed light red beard. His hair was combed so that it stood out, around his head, and, as it was starting to recede the effect was that of an uneven halo.

Leota was introduced and was offered a slender, yielding hand.

"So glad you came," Miles said, graciously and called, softly, "Juliet."

Juliet was Mrs. Miles. She took long, swinging, slow steps toward her latest guests, whom she welcomed with a cordial drawl. She wore a trailing gown of blue-green chiffon which fell in straight lines from shoulder to hem. L ota noticed that it was badly torn and quite dirty around the bottom, but that Juliet never lifted it, even when it was being stepped on.

Leota left her coat in a tiny bedroom, which contained a lovely mahogany chest of drawers and, in a dark corner, a small table of golden oak—and Frederickson had taught Leota that to possess golden oak was almost a criminal offence. She powdered her nose and carefully puffed out her hair before going back into the studio.

Leota found her host, hostess and escort deep in conversation with a group near the fireside, so she joined them. They nodded but did not interrupt the rather pompous fat man who was talking. Leota was introduced to few people. She found that, if you had anything to say to anyone, you said it. She found, too, that it was quite unlikely she would have anything to say.

"Have you seen the head?" a greyish-looking man asked her.

"No, I haven't," said Leota.

The man led the way to the centre of the room, as if to a great discovery. A group of people parted so they, too, might admire.

"There," said the greyish-looking man.

"The head" was the bust of a man of about sixty, a pouchy fellow, with small eyes and rather a sneer, a double-chinned person with neat hair.

"How do you like it?"

"It's awfully nice," said Leota, in her best artistic manner.

"Wonderful," the man agreed. "He's caught so much—the spirit, the tone. Who other than Hartwell Miles could have taken a man like that, an ordinary looking Western banker, mind you, and show his soul, quivering, to the world. A real unveiling—that's what it is. Miles can catch his butterflies."

"I—I like it a lot," said Leota.

The other heads received careful attention, too. Whether sold or not, Leota did not know, but they were of famous people, a dancer, a popular novelist, a composer, a statesman. The pottery was the work of Juliet Miles and praise of these pieces was extravagant. The glazes rivalled in colour, it seemed, those on the tiles of the French sixteenth century.

Leota watched the people, interestedly. They were rather sharply divided, it seemed. Either they were artistic, in the way New Yorkers take to show temperament, or they seemed a bit floridly over-dressed. The other guests were introduced, almost formally, to the over-dressed ones. They were treated perhaps even a bit too graciously, but they seemed little at ease, even when quite proud and patronizing. Mr. Ray, the Western banker, and his wife came, late in the afternoon and took their places, definitely, with the over-dressed ones. The artistic guests buzzed about them, praising the head and Miles' interpretative work, flattering, almost cooing. Leota talked to bejewelled matrons, to slim, bobbed-haired girls or slender, effeminate looking young men and soon got to the bottom of it. The over-dressed ones were the patrons of the arts, of course, and it was well to bend to them, to listen to all they said, to agree with them, to flatter their tastes, to bring sketches for their approval, to laugh at their witticisms, for, only in this way, would the patrons of the arts fulfil their missions as patrons.

The conversation was of art but the touches were light, deft. Art was beautiful, inspiring, a high point at which to aim, something to worship. Hartwell Miles' work was taken with great seriousness. Each head came in for half an hour's serious discussion and praise. Groups continually gathered about them. Each of the bits of pottery was praised separately. A rather tall man with long, oily hair, began to speak of his trip abroad, and

Leota knew as his voice grew loud, insistent, that it was planned that he should give an informal "talk." The others grew silent, as he told them that in America really the best, the new, the real art was to be found. The artists here were doing more to uplift real freedom of expression than those of any other nationality—we were the bud, the flower of the coming generation—and Miles was among the highest of these.

"In art, in literature, the older countries have had their day. We of the newer generation of America are triumphing. We are carrying the torch of freedom of expression in every medium. We of the newer generation are the renaissance. Few of the publications are open to us, yet even now we have the *New Republic*, the *Liberator*, the *Pagan*. Few of the art shops have broken away from the iron hands of tradition, of ugliness. Still, one at a time, the doors are opening, as doors must open to beauty, to truth, to newer thought that we of the new generation are bringing."

A rather well-trained butler—Leota knew that he was hired for the occasion—brought in the tea things. There was an enormous tea, then, with hundreds of tiny sandwiches, filled with a variety of chopped fillings, rich little cakes, well-prepared drinks.

"I hope Miles got a lot for that head," thought Leota, "neither he nor his wife looks awfully prosperous."

The guests ate sparingly, nibbling daintily of the sandwiches, as they prattled nicely about art, about "their work," the artistic half of the crowd flattering, admiring, being gracious to the over-dressed half, who, in turn, a rather bewildered turn, asked questions concerning arts and artists, talked of themselves, their homes, their tastes, their business, their prosperity.

Then the guests started to go. Leota noticed that the "outsiders" made the first move. In less than fifteen minutes they were all gone, after many pretty adieux, hand shakings and compliments.

"Shall we go?" asked Leota of young Frederickson, who was seated on a couch in a corner, talking, with gestures, to a girl in black and gold.

"Oh, dear, no," said Frederickson. "I want you to know all of these charming people better."

Leota had felt rather bored, out of it. The "rich folks" had evidently guessed she was not artistic, the artistic folks must have known she wasn't rich. No one had paid much attention to her. Now she hoped things would be better.

To Leota it seemed as if these people had been acting in a play. Now the play was over, everyone suddenly relaxed, grew comfortable. The women all started to smoke, taking pillows from the couches and arranging themselves gracefully on the floor, near the fireplace.

Miles said something to Frederickson about Leota. Frederickson laughed his pleasantly affected, high laugh.

"Oh, Mrs. Clifford. Quite jolly. Husband's in England, so I told her I'd look out for her to-day. Known her for years. Did her apartment last year—oh, yes, up town, but all gold and black and dull red, quite nice."

"Pass the sandwiches, Gig," said a girl in orange to a lanky youth with a loose tie.

"I'm glad the affair passed off nicely," sighed Juliet Miles, as if she were all alone.

Everyone grabbed the sandwiches and ate rapidly. Leota was glad they were going to be eaten, but she did hope she could reach them before they were all gone. The butler had vanished. Leota secured quite a pile with shredded chicken in them, so she was quite satisfied. All seemed proud of their ability to "pig"—pig, as a verb, seemed a favourite word—so nobody noticed Leota.

The conversation, though still artistic, became more personal, shoppier. Miles had secured the Rays through Gig Morton, the tall boy, who, of course, had got a commission. If you brought a patron of the arts to an artist and the artist got an order, you received a commission. Miriam Young had

brought the Van Horns to the tea. They had bought three paintings from her, in less than a year, but were tired of paintings now, so she was "handing them over." The Greenes had had their country house done by young Burkley, a rival of Frederickson, and had been invited to the tea because they "loved to meet such artistic people" and because Mrs. Greene, if properly flattered, might find that a head by Hartwell Miles was the one thing needed to complete her home. If you were rich and met one artist member of the group—and took advice—you could have your home designed, the grounds chosen and planned, the home built and furnished, your portrait painted, your gowns made, all by the "newer artists" whom your first artistic friend was lucky enough to know and kind enough to introduce you to.

This amused Leota, but she was not entertained in the way she had expected to be. She was rather annoyed at being disillusioned. Although not rich enough to be a patron of the arts, she would have preferred worshipping.

On the whole, the conversation did not interest her. No one attempted to draw her into it. She could have said anything, if she had found space for it, but she didn't have anything to say. The conversation was about art, mostly about painting, sculpture, decoration, about statuettes, book-covers, old chests. Nothing was explained, defined. It was taken for granted that everyone knew about everything under discussion, just as, when the conversation became more personal, and a bit catty, it was taken for granted that everyone knew all of the little personal jokes and the people talked about. You could say anything you wanted to about a person, no matter how frank, it seemed, though you might be called "snooty"—another favourite word—when you got through. Those who had been nicest, when "company" was present, became cattiest, now. Though everyone wasn't catty. Gig had his arms around the girl in orange and held her cup, as she drank. Juliet Miles stroked the hair of young Burkley, though he didn't seem to enjoy it a great deal, he had black, sleek hair. It was artistic enough, Leota admitted, though rather a bore, on the whole.

It was quite dark when the guests started to go, "to get some real food to eat," they admitted. Frederickson and Leota took a bus again. A cool wind had risen and it was no longer pleasant on top. Inside it smelled of petrol and made Leota slightly ill.

Back in her apartment, Leota suggested that Frederickson stay for supper and he accepted hastily. It was Freda's afternoon out, but Katie prepared an acceptable salad and there was some cold meat and a good cheese. Frederickson seemed to enjoy it.

During the meal it was easy enough to find things to talk about, the people they had seen during the afternoon, the theatres they had attended. These were the first of Frederickson's friends Leota had met, and, though he called them "charming," Leota was surprised at the little personal, cutting things—"snooty" things—he said about them, how they "lifted" customers, how little some of them knew about their work, things about their domestic life. After supper, the conversation dragged into silence. Leota found Frederickson rather shoppy. Now that he was not working on her apartment and could not talk about draperies and colour, they had no bond. Leota knew and cared little about art and decoration, about Frederickson's commercial progress. He cared about little else. Leota brought out a big box of candy and they ate a lot of it. She tried playing on the piano, but Frederickson was not interested. At eleven he thought he had better go and Leota agreed with him. He shook hands, warmly, and said he would come in to dinner, soon.

Leota had had no idea that people could be so difficult to entertain. The reception had been interesting enough—but afterwards! Frederickson talked enough, if you encouraged him, but he said such conceited, uninteresting, boring things. Still, there were other men

—Wilmott for one—he was to call the next evening.

CHAPTER X

LEOTA spent Monday down town with Aline Buell and a friend of theirs, a Mrs. Rutherford. They had luncheon at the Tally-Ho, chocolate at Page and Shaw and tried on hats in every shop from Wanamaker's to Tappé's. Leota was tired when she returned home, so she undressed and bathed, eating dinner in a loose boudoir gown and dressing afterwards. She was just finishing her toilet when Claron Wilmott called, so she kept him waiting a few minutes in the living room—purposing drawing out the final details of her toilet, fingering the various ivory and silver things on her dressing table, rubbing imaginary bits of powder from her eyebrows, touching her lips once more with her lip-stick—so that her entrance would be more effective. She wore black and had added a flat gold rose to her bodice.

Wilmott was delighted to see Leota, he told her. He held both of his hands out for her hands and shook them long and heartily. Then, after waiting, with effect, he handed her a box of candy.

Leota was really pleased with the candy—though it was a small box of a kind she did not care for—she liked the idea of getting candy from a man other than her husband.

His presentation over, Wilmott assumed charge of the conversation, telling Leota how pleased he had been to hear from her, how busy he'd been all the week, the number of invitations he'd had, the places he'd been to.

Wilmott liked to pose as a man-about-town, a prosperous bachelor, a good catch. He was about forty-five, but thought he seemed younger. He was rather fat and florid, with light hair which he parted nearly in the centre and whisked up smartly at each side. His skin seemed darker than his hair. His cheeks, which had been quite full early in life, were beginning to pouch and under his chin he was beginning to be quite flabby. He had fat, red hands and on the backs of them was a quantity of light hair. He was rather a smug fellow, with the conceit that a presentable bachelor who is capable of filling in at dinners and theatre parties so frequently acquires.

He sat, now, one leg slightly over the other, bringing well into view his patent leather shoes and tan spats. He wore a grey sack suit with threads of red, blue and green running through the material.

He told Leota of his activities during the past winter, of his popularity, his tact.

"So I said to myself, 'if Mrs. Clifford asks me to come to see her, I'll come, no matter how busy I am. I don't know a finer little woman and that's a fact.' So I telephoned Mrs. Johnson and told her I had a business engagement, out of town. Indeed I did. Not that Mrs. Johnson isn't a fine woman. Indeed she is. And so is Annabelle. But I don't want to get in too deep with them, I don't want to get married. That's a fact. Not that Annabelle or the Johnsons have said anything, you understand. But you can't guess how careful a man's got to be these days. And, while there are charming women like you who will give a man the honour of calling on them there's no use getting married, now is there? Annabelle Johnson is a fine girl; a fine girl. She'll make some man a fine wife. Only, when I saw how the land lay, asking me to dinner every week or two and to go to the opera, not to mention a visit to Greenpoint, I felt I ought to call a halt. Not that I don't enjoy going with them—but there is no use giving the little girl a false impression, raising false hopes, all that. You know how I feel about things. Why should I marry, anyhow? I've got a fine apartment, my own boss, go and come when I please, my club when I want it. Not that I don't think a lot of women—you know I do, Mrs. Clifford. That's what I always say—I love the women—I love all of them. That's why I don't marry—I love the women too much, couldn't choose one from among so many."

He uncrossed his legs, ponderously,

coughed, moved over to the couch where Leota sat, seated himself near her.

"Is he going to make love to me, hold my hand?" thought Leota. She knew well enough that he was. Well, why not? Wasn't that what she wanted, to be made love to by a man not her husband? Hadn't she thought of Wilmott as a most attractive fellow, a popular bachelor?

Sure enough, Wilmott picked up one of Leota's hands, turning over the palm and looked at it, muttering "a good hand, a good hand," then, "such a nice little hand," and squeezed it between his own. Except that it was less painful, the experiment proved about as thrilling as having her nails manicured. Leota drew her hand away and pretended to arrange her hair.

"Now don't get angry, Mrs. Clifford, Leota. I don't mean a thing. Not a thing. You know me too well for that. I like you, my dear young lady, I admire you. That's all, no offence."

"I'm not offended, Mr. Wilmott," said Leota.

Wilmott did not move from his position on the couch. He talked, again, about the past winter, his plans for the summer, the plays he had seen and enjoyed, told what he thought of them. He was fond of the theatre and could predict the success of a play from the opening night, every time, it seemed. Then, Leota felt his arm go around her, felt his hand press her toward him, heard him rumble, "Dear little girl, what a dear little girl you are. I love the ladies," felt his face against her, his lips.

Leota stood up, as languidly as she could and went toward the piano, sat on the bench and played a popular air, then turned toward Wilmott, smiling again. There was no use getting angry. Why be the indignant female and hiss "How dare you?" It had been her own fault if being made love to by a popular bachelor seemed humiliating instead of thrilling—

Wilmott took his rebuff calmly enough. After a moment he returned to his old, cheerful manner, a bit reserved, dignified, perhaps, to show Leota that other women considered him desirable, that it was she who was in the wrong. Leota tried to listen attentively to his stories, nodding her head and smiling.

Leota had told Freda to prepare oysters à la Thorndike and coffee, and to have them ready at ten. She had thought it would seem so cosy to have a bite to eat at that time. Katie, in a very fresh cap and apron, came now to tell her that the oysters were ready.

The chafing-dish and percolator were on the table when Leota and Wilmott reached the dining-room and they both ate heartily of the oysters. This led Wilmott to tell of the numerous dinner invitations he received, how hard it was for him to refuse anyone and how impossible it was to accept them all—a bachelor in New York, it seemed, a popular, eligible, good-looking bachelor, was invited to dinners every evening, his only difficulty being to pick the most desirable dinners.

Wilmott left at eleven, after a hearty good-bye. He pinched Leota's cheek playfully and told her she must "get over being so touchy." He said he'd be glad to come to dinner any night she'd say, in spite of numerous engagements.

Trying to fall asleep that night, Leota went over the affairs of the week—for it would be a week, to-morrow, that Will had gone. An exciting week, yet it hadn't been happy, nothing had gone just right. Of course it had been pleasant, being free, the long mornings of wasted time, of chocolate eating, still, these were things she could do, had done, when Will was home. Of course, Wilmott was dreadful. Still, other men had put their arms around her—years ago, before she was married. It wasn't that. It was the lack of feeling, Wilmott's calm assurance that every woman would yield to him, that he was charming, popular, Wilmott's opinion of her. After all, she had flattered him whenever she met him, had written him a note. She had been a fool. Oh, well, there were other men

besides Haines and Frederickson and Wilmott. Denning for one—he hadn't called yet—he was good-looking and young—she might meet other new men, too—and there was Jeddy. After all, only a week had passed.

Leota wasted Tuesday morning, as she wasted so many mornings. In the afternoon she went downtown, alone, and did some necessary shopping; towels she needed, a new crêpe waist, some caps for Katie. She ate dinner alone, rather grumpily. She had a good appetite, after being in the open air, but she admitted that it was rather a bore, sitting at the table all alone. At least Will was a good listener, really interested in what she was saying, nodding at the right time, laughing at her little jokes. She went to bed early—what else was there to do?

CHAPTER XI

WEDNESDAY was the luncheon Irene Sears was giving for her guest. How silly to give a luncheon at home! It's far more interesting at a restaurant.

The luncheon was at one—and Leota arrived there as she always arrived, a few minutes late but not quite the last. It was the usual luncheon, the hostess nervously gracious, with one eye on the extra maid, the guest of honour chirpy, smiling, the other guests a bit affected, assuming an air of indifference and nonchalance, but ready to chatter, friendly, once the ice was broken. Leota knew most of the guests. She liked the things to eat, all but the eggs with the extraordinary sauce and the size of the frappé. Why will people serve eggs at luncheons and ices in miniature? She invited Irene Sears and her guest to have luncheon with her the following Thursday and to go to a matinée.

Leota ate dinner alone that evening and the next. Three dinners alone! Who could have imagined that Will, plain old Will, could have been so exciting, someone to look forward to, to question about the day's happenings, to talk with?

The music lecture on Friday seemed more tiresome than usual. Leota was glad there was only one more left, for the season. Each one seemed poorer than the last, but you might as well go, if you're paying for them. Now she couldn't even make fun of this one to Will. It had been lots of fun, laughing over them at dinner.

Leota greeted Saturday with a real quickening of emotion. Here, at last, was something definite to do. All week there had been nothing but the usual day-time engagements with women, shopping, gossiping. But now she was going to have a real adventure, staying all night with Roberta.

Leota went to a matinée with Aline Buell, taking her smallest travelling bag, containing her toilet things and a gown, with her. She hoped things would be all right at home, she'd never been away this way before—both Freda and Katie had promised to stay in, but you couldn't tell what might happen.

After the matinée she and Aline had ice-cream and sat chatting until half-past five, when Aline had to go home to dinner.

Leota took a bus to Roberta's, getting there a few minutes before six. Roberta had just come in. She greeted Leota warmly.

"So here's the little uptown mouse, ready for a vacation. That's fine. Here's your bedroom," pointing to a couch in the front studio room. "Sit down and take off your coat, I'll be ready in a minute. Some luck, little one, the crowd's going to be at the Wet Rat. We're all to eat dinner there, Dutch treat, you know. Something interesting is bound to happen."

Roberta ran around, changing her neat shirt-waist for a more artistic creation, a blouse of purple, with splashes of yellow painted on it. Roberta did nothing artistic, but she liked to pose as artistic, creative, and spoke of her chemistry position as if it were quite important. She had chosen a "studio" instead of an ordinary apartment to further this conceit. It was a grubby enough place, in a made-over building which had far less artistic charm than

the studio occupied by the Hartwell Miles'. That had been, definitely, Gramercy Park, this was "the Village."

The "studio" was of medium size, but was strewn with dozens of meaningless articles, an odd hat, an empty straw-covered claret bottle, shoes. On the tables were perhaps fifty magazines in various stages of disintegration, covers gone, ragged edged. The walls, originally yellow, showed unfaded squares where pictures had been. They were hung now with weird examples of modern "art" and huge posters, announcing balls at Webster Hall and lectures by radicals, vividly coloured, slightly torn. The furniture was kitchen stuff, cheap chairs and tables, painted in bright, cheap, disharmonizing colours.

Off the studio was a tiny kitchenette —a gas burner with two holes, a small ice box, a row of pots and pans hanging on nails above the stove, a tiny cabinet of dishes and provisions. This was separated from the studio by a brown screen, also ornamented with posters and new "art." A bathroom, containing an old tin tub, whose latest coat of enamel was beginning to disappear, and a tiny bedroom with a single iron bed and dresser, completed the studio. Curtains of a brown material resembling burlap hung at the windows and the couch was covered with a strip of blue velvet, which did not quite reach to the back, the deficiency being concealed by half a dozen cushions in a row. A woman was supposed to clean the apartment while Roberta was at work, but as Roberta was not particular this was often neglected.

Leota knew she ought to see more beauty in Roberta's apartment than she did. She admitted it was smug and uptown to prefer cleanliness and order and a pleasant view from her windows. Roberta couldn't afford those things, but she said other things were more important — freedom, doing what you liked, even having an affair. This wasn't a cage, at any rate.

Roberta was a pleasant-looking girl, a year or two younger than Leota. She was of medium height, rather fair, and inclined to be a little too stout. She had a good colour, a short, upturned nose with frank nostrils, a flabby mouth and weak chin. She went with people younger than herself, usually, and liked to think that she was "just a girl."

"Come on," she said. "We're to meet the others at the Wet Rat. Seems good to you to get away, doesn't it? Don't see how you stand it, never getting out or meeting people or seeing anything."

"Oh, I do get out," Leota found herself unexpectedly defending her mode of life, "I go to see all the good shows and go to all the restaurants and roof gardens and go to luncheons and dances and—"

"Oh, things like that," dismissed Roberta. "I mean real things, people who think. Wait till you see our crowd tonight."

Leota wanted to see them, wanted to be convinced.

The Wet Rat was one of the newest of the Village restaurants, Roberta told her, on the way over. The common herd, the up-town seekers for novelty had not yet found it. It still belonged to the sacred inner circle of thinkers.

Before she became conscious of her thoughts, Leota wished Will was with her. Will would so have enjoyed these people—he always spoke of them as "a little group of serious pikers." Then she remembered—Will, indeed! Because Will was a scoffer, who did not believe in free thought, in self-expression, must she bow to him? Had married life enslaved her so that she could not think alone, that she must see things through his eyes? Why, she could be free, as free as Roberta. This was real—living—

The Wet Rat looked to Leota like the average Village restaurants she had seen. But of course it was different. She'd soon see that.

The restaurant had been originally, the basement of an old house. The various pipes still showed, on the ceiling, but the ceiling and walls had been painted a bright blue, ornamented with yellow stripes. The tables and chairs

were the usual kitchen variety, painted red and black, and the tables had a paper napkin at each place, in lieu of table cloths. You could see into the kitchen, from the open door at the back, but, after one look, Leota decided it was just as well not to.

A rude, ill-mannered girl, with a rough, unpleasant voice and oily-looking hair, cut short like a cap, was the proprietor. She nodded to Roberta and called, "The crowd's over there, Miller."

They passed through narrow aisles of tables to a long table near the rear, where about ten people were already seated.

"Here's Roberta," "Hello, old sport," "Hello, Miller," members of the group called. Leota was introduced all around, not as "Mrs. Clifford," but as "A friend of mine, Leota Clifford." There were no titles in the Wet Rat, it seemed.

After much moving and chair scraping, places were made for Roberta and Leota, and Leota had a fairly clean paper napkin in front of her and a knife marked "The Blue Bird" and a bent-tined fork engraved "The Happy Cricket." She looked around at her new acquaintances. The men looked as if they might be clerks or bookkeepers. They were fairly neat but poorly dressed. One had rather long hair and all but one were smooth-shaven. Four of the women had on the plain shirt-waist-and-skirt outfit of the average saleswoman or office worker, one wore a smock of bright red crêpe, not very clean, another a dress of pale blue, trimmed with many ruffles, the sort of dress a small-town belle would have delighted in.

Ordinarily, Leota would have felt rather sorry for this group, because they were not more prosperous. But she saw that sympathy was out of place, that they were all self-satisfied, conceited, superior. The conversation was rather loud but not at all remarkable. There was the news that "Jim thought he had sold a story to *Munsey's*," followed by sarcastic references to Jim and his writing ability. Someone else they knew had had an article in the *New Republic*, three weeks before. This was discussed at length as if it were epochal. They talked of other writers they knew, of mutual friends, repeating bits of scandal. They agreed that the food was "the best in town for the price." A few acquaintances came to their table to talk, but the conversation was commonplace—the whole affair reminded Leota of the suppers she had had, years before, at the Young People's League, in the basement of the church, in Westmont. Yet, these people were supposed to be "living their own lives," "creating art," things like that. Roberta had even told Leota that several of these people were living in domesticity unfettered by the marriage bond, that they had nobly "thrown aside convention." To Leota, the dinner, even the famous "beef stew" which they all had advised her to take, was absolutely inedible, so she nibbled on a bit of heavy bread. She was awfully hungry. The cigarette smoke hurt her eyes. There was no ventilation.

The crowd talked on and on. Leota listened wearily, to hear, for the third time, about the story one of the group had sold, a full year ago, to a second-rate magazine. She found that many of the group had inartistic positions by which they earned their livings, and, though they talked of success, they seemed to lack all definite aim. Everything they were doing, writing or art, no matter how small, was wonderful, brilliant, new, and the work of all others, especially people who had achieved success, was banal, stupid, commercial. They were fearfully in earnest. Most of them had come from small towns and still retained their small-town mannerisms. Instead of being worldly, cultured, clever, as Leota had hoped they would be, outside of a few affectations they were more provincial than she was, wrapped up in their own narrow little set, prejudiced, rather dull. As far as Leota could tell, they had produced nothing in any line which, even if "discovered," could make them famous in any way, though they were all

looking forward to fame, as their natural due.

At ten Leota asked Roberta if they were to stay much longer, her head was starting to hurt badly. Roberta suggested they go to the Brevoort, there was always a good crowd there. Two of the men and the girl in the red smock offered to accompany them. The rest of the crowd declared they were "broke" and would "go up to Gertie's." The party at the Brevoort would, of course, be Dutch treat, as all Village parties were.

CHAPTER XII

Leota liked the Brevoort. She went there frequently with Will and some of their friends, driving down after the theatre. How often she wished she had known some of the distinguished-looking people she saw. She had always felt a bit out of it, middle-class. Now she was with people who would know everyone.

They found a vacant table in the middle room. Leota liked that, they could see everyone who came in. The people at her table nodded to others. They pointed out Jefferson, the magazine writer; McManus, who had had a serial running in a popular weekly. Then, Ardley Dupont went through, stopped at their table! Dupont was one of Leota's favourite writers of fiction—he wrote wonderful things about glowing nights, heart throbs, moonlight on silver water, passionate kisses. She could hardly believe it possible when she was introduced and heard his name. He was a pompous, fat little fellow, with a bright eye and a perkily held head. He was glad she liked his last book—his next would be out in a week or two, the best thing he'd ever done—advanced copies had gone to the reviewers and were getting wonderful notices. He was sure of himself, smug, vain. Leota noticed, too, that her new acquaintances, who had said they despised commercial successes, hung on his words in a worshipful attitude. No, he couldn't wait, not even for one drink—a whole table of friends waiting for him. He bowed briskly, was gone. She had met a real writer at last, and, remembering the real thrills the books had given her and their smug, bantam-like author, she was sorry she had.

Leota's crowd ordered many rounds of drinks and she ordered a chicken sandwich, too. She didn't care much about drinking, but the people began to seem a little brighter, gayer. Three others joined their party, a thin, tired woman whose husband was a lecturer; two men, both thin, pale; one sold bonds. They were full of the Revolution.

"Do you know what is going to happen, what is already happening, as we sit here in idleness?" one of the men asked Leota. Leota couldn't imagine.

"Revolution," said the man. "The People won't stand a bit more. Why should they? Why shouldn't they have everything—instead of the millionaire and capitalists having everything? This, all this," he motioned with thin hands, "will fall. It is getting ready to topple, even now. Why shouldn't it? This thin layer of civilization is on the edge of a mighty volcano—you can hear the rumbling. A year from now, six months, this will all be gone."

"I don't think so," said Leota. Not thinking so seemed the best way to get rid of so unpleasant a thought.

"Bah—what *you* think! What do *you* know? It will come. In a few months we will not be here. This will be gone—all gone."

Leota wondered how she had gone on, not knowing what was about to happen. She grew cold and shivered. Maybe it was on account of the drinks.

They talked of the revolution for an hour. There were more drinks. Leota noticed that Roberta was gayer, was talking, gesturing.

Leota glanced around the room. There, at a table close by, were the Hills and the Kennedys. She smiled at them brightly, then looked at the reflection of her own table in the mirror. Leota wasn't really a snob, she felt.

Yet she was rather ashamed of this company, these cheap-looking men, untidy-looking women. How clean and correct the Hills and the Kennedys looked!—why, Will always looked correct and clean, too. Of course, now she was with real thinkers, Bohemians, she ought to feel beyond the thought of superficial appearance. She wondered what her friends were thinking about her. Of course she could tell them, later, what a wonderful time she had had, make them jealous of her freedom . . .

When the waiters began piling chairs on tables and the lights flickered, her crowd was ready to go. Each person made an attempt to pay for himself, but Leota knew that her bill was larger than the drinks and sandwich she had had. She didn't mind that—Will was generous with household money. But she did feel embarrassed as she paid it—she had never paid for a meal while men had been present or at night—she didn't know whether or not she should tip. She gave the waiter a tip of fifty cents and he thanked her, so it must have been all right.

The group went with them to Roberta's studio and all came in. Roberta brought out some whisky and some rather warm soda and they drank it out of dull-looking glasses. One of the men stretched out on the couch and fell asleep. The girls sat on the floor. Roberta had stopped being gay and was silent and a bit sullen.

At half-past two the crowd left. Leota was tired. They had all been so, well, rather messy. Even their jokes had been unpleasant toward the end and the men put their hands on your shoulder, touching you, saying things not at all respectful. Leota started to undress slowly. She felt as if she were doing something wrong to stay. She wished she'd decided to go home.

Roberta started to cry. Leota, trying to cheer her up, made her tears flow faster.

"You don't understand," sobbed Roberta, "you don't understand anything. Here I am, poor girl, all alone in city, no one, no one."

"That's all right," Leota soothed. She was not used to people who had been drinking. Will never drank much and you couldn't tell he'd ever had anything. "You'll be all right in the morning."

"I'm a poor girl, all alone, nobody loves me. You're so stupid, you think I'm a bad, bad girl."

"Why, I don't at all," said Leota.

"And Charlie, he went away."

"But you sent him away. You told me so, last year. You were both free, so when you found you no longer loved, you separated without the blackness of marriage or divorce."

"Never sent him away. He went. He said we were all wrong, got religion and all that. Didn't want freedom of youth. Called me old girl, married girl of nineteen, bond of matrimony. I don't know a man, nineteen, to marry. He don't like the Village any more. I'm all alone in cruel city, all alone."

Leota cheered up Roberta a little and got her to bed. Then she made the couch into a bed as best she could, with the grey-looking sheets she managed to find under Roberta's directions. They looked unpressed, unsanitary. She hated to crawl in between them. Why had she left her own apartment for this sort of thing?

She waked up about ten on Sunday. Roberta was still asleep. She tried to clean up some of the numerous cigarette ashes, to get the smell of smoke and liquor out of the room. Her head still ached. At twelve, after an unpleasant and not very successful effort to bathe and dress, she waked Roberta.

Roberta was more cheerful than she had expected to find her. She'd be all right if she had some coffee. Leota puttered around the kitchenette and made some as good as she could and Roberta, unbathed, came into the studio for it, wearing an untidy pink kimono. There was also some stale bread and preserves, though neither of them cared for those.

Roberta retold the story she had hinted at, the night before. She and Charlie had separated, not so much because she had wanted to go her way as because he had wanted to go his. Ro-

berta admitted this was the way things should be—personal liberty. Charlie was forty and was getting ahead in business. Freedom no longer appealed to him. He wanted to settle down, a home and a position, his own friends. He didn't want to be laughed at for the nonsense of his youth. He was married now and didn't come to the Village. And Roberta, though she stoutly maintained that she was "free and had a right to live her own life," felt that life was not being awfully kind to her.

Leota was amazed to see, though Roberta wouldn't admit it, that Roberta envied Leota's life, stupid, uninspired, up-town, middle-class, cared for. Roberta insisted that Will was a bore, that Leota was "wasting herself, never lived or felt"—but she knew that she, herself, was getting on, she didn't want to keep on working as a chemist always, paying for her own meals, spending a lot of time alone. . . .

Leota left, after she'd helped put the studio in order. Someone telephoned, asking Roberta to go to a party that afternoon, and Roberta, accepting gleefully, wanted Leota to go along, promising another "good time like we had last night." But Leota said she had a headache, which was true enough. The ride seemed dreadfully long.

She took another bath and washed her hair as soon as she got home and gave Katie directions to have all of the things she had worn washed immediately or sent to the cleaners. They were definitely unwearable. She spent the rest of the day lying down or trying to read a little. She was quite tired.

CHAPTER XIII

A WHOLE week passed, a usual week, except that Leota ate her dinner all alone and spent lonely evenings too full of novel-reading and chocolate-eating. There were two committee meetings, and on Wednesday she went to a matinée with Aline. Thursday she took Irene Sears and her guest to Sherry's for luncheon and then to a matinée and to tea. Friday morning was the last musical lecture of the season and later she and Aline and a Mrs. Halpin spent the day shopping. Saturday was the loneliest day of all, a long day of nothing to do.

Sunday afternoon Howard Denning called. He was a nice boy, even Leota had to admit that. They had tea and then talked. But Denning, with his little flatteries and jokes, his gay little efforts, wasn't very exciting. At a dinner party, with other people around, even sitting in a box at the theatre, he decidedly had his place. But, having him all alone, with his little presumptions that he was desirable, even necessary, wasn't pleasant. Leota was rather glad when he went away. What was the matter with men, anyhow? It couldn't be altogether her fault. She wasn't ugly nor old nor terribly stupid. There must be men, somewhere, wonderful men. Then she thought of Dr. Stanton and Jeddy.

Dr. Stanton was wonderful, awfully popular, almost too popular, people said. But he liked her, Leota knew that. He'd told her so. Not because he was her physician—her regular doctor was an old grey-haired dear—she had just had Dr. Stanton for nerve trouble, last year. He'd asked to call, take her to dinner, then.

Monday morning Leota rang him up. He seemed surprised, when she told him she was "just lonely and had thought of him," but when she asked him to come to dinner "any day this week you aren't busy," he accepted quite promptly for Wednesday. Still, that wasn't enough. Leota wanted something even more exciting.

Here, three weeks of her freedom were over. Cablegrams from Will told her that he might be home even a little earlier than he had anticipated. She hadn't lived, broken away from the commonplace, escaped—she must do something . . .

She thought again of Jeddy. These other men—she had no bond with them. Frederickson, his friends, the unwashed, stupid acquaintances of Ro-

berta—Haines—Wilmott—but Jeddy was different. Still, she had written him a note and he hadn't answered. Maybe he hadn't received her note. That was it, of course. Often, Will complained because he didn't get his letters, someone else in the office had opened a personal letter or something—

Half a dozen times she found herself near the telephone. At last she looked up his number in the telephone book, gave the number to the operator. An impersonal woman's voice answered, with the usual, "Wait a minute, please," another woman's voice, cool, distinct—his secretary, of course—"who wished to speak with Mr. Hallidan?"

"Mrs. Clifford," said Leota, then she remembered that maybe Jeddy wouldn't remember her last name, "Leota French Clifford," she answered. A pause, a click, then a man's voice, calm, rather formal.

"Good-morning. This is Mr. Hallidan."

"Oh, good-morning. This is Leota—Leota French, you know."

"Good-morning," briskly cordial.

"I—I wrote you a note, did you get it?"

"Why, yes, I did. Awfully glad to hear from you. I've been awfully busy, you know. I've been expecting to call on you."

So—he had got her note, after all. She went on, rather limply:

"I just thought it would be—be rather nice to see you again. It's been so long—"

"I should like to see you, I'm sure."

"I'd like you to call, come in to tea, some afternoon."

"I'm rather busy for teas, but I'd be glad to."

"Any day this week?"

A pause then.

"Yes, this week will be all right. Thursday?"

"Thursday will be splendid. You'll call, then?"

"Yes, good-bye."

Leota left the telephone rather dazed, muttering the words she had used, wishing she had said something else. Then a solution came to her, a comfortable solution—he had been telephoning from the office, of course—how could he be anything but politely formal, a married man with his secretary right at his elbow. Of course it was that. How stupid of her—all these years—she was to see Jeddy on Thursday.

But this was only Monday. The day dragged.

Leota decided to eat alone that evening, in the Village. That's how other women met people, not anything as vulgar as "picking up," of course, but people who did things—if you went to artistic places—

Leota put on her dark tailored suit and her plainest hat. She chose The Monk's Cave, a place she had heard mentioned at Hartwell Miles's tea and when she was with Roberta. Everyone who counted went there, sooner or later. She knew where it was, too.

Leota called up the garage. The car arrived promptly and she got to the restaurant just about six. It was another basement restaurant but nicer than the Wet Rat, with brown walls and tables. Leota shared a table with three others. She knew no one. Little groups came in, but they talked only among themselves. Leota tried to say something pleasant to those at her table. They coolly ignored her. She felt uncomfortable and ill-at-ease without an escort. She hurried through her meal and went home.

But Tuesday she was lonely again and decided to try dining out alone once more. She chose The Blue Plume, a cheerful little place with yellow walls stencilled with strange birds in blue hangings. There was clean linen on the tables—and napkins. Leota looked around, but, when no eager acquaintances beckoned, she chose a small table against the wall. The food was quite satisfactory. Leota looked around, interested, but no one spoke to her. The diners, in twos and fours, were quiet, decent, rather dull looking. They did not seem to want to make friends.

Finally a man came in and took the

seat across from her. He was not bad looking, with grey hair, a thick moustache—he might have been anyone—oh, quite likely an artist.

"All alone?" he asked.

"Yes," said Leota. "It's pleasant here, isn't it? Quite nice."

"Yes, I like it. Come here often." His voice seemed rather uneven. He ordered a cup of coffee. "Never saw you here before."

"I've never been here before."

"Newcomer, eh? New in New York? Better get acquainted."

Leota couldn't quite place him. His voice was thick, unpleasant. Had he been drinking? It was quite early to be drunk, just half-past six. Still, he was peculiar. Leota hurried through her pastry and demi-tasse, called the waiter, paid her bill.

"Not in a hurry?" asked the man across the table.

"Rather."

"Don't want to wait for me?"

"I'm afraid not."

She hurried out. She had ridden down on the bus and there was no taxicab in sight. It was rather dark. She hesitated. The man came out of the restaurant, grabbed her arm.

"Oh, there you are. Afraid you'd give me the slip."

"Let me go," said Leota.

"There, there, don't take it so hard, young lady. No harm meant, no harm meant. We're old friends, ain't we, old friends? Come let's go somewhere and have a drink, nice little drink—"

Leota pulled away, frightened, started to run down the street. A taxi passed. She hailed it, climbed in. She couldn't see the man when she looked out. Her heart was beating frightfully. Of course there wasn't anything to be afraid of, so early in the evening. Women ate alone every night, nothing happened to them—Roberta made her friends in restaurants—Roberta—in the future she wasn't going out alone, after dark. It was quite all right, of course, only—well, she wouldn't try it.

CHAPTER XIV

WEDNESDAY Dr. Stanton arrived promptly at seven. Leota was ready to receive him and he squeezed her fingers, bowed low over her hand. She remembered now what wonderful manners he had. He was so complete, finished, his smooth brown hair, his pointed beard, his good boots.

He led the conversation to mutual friends, saying something courteous and pleasant about everyone. He told Leota how splendid she was looking, inquired politely after Will. When dinner was announced he took Leota's arm with an assumed pompous gaiety and marched into the dining room.

The dinner was good. Leota was glad of that. After the soup, Dr. Stanton relaxed a bit, told Leota about some of the cases he had been attending.

"Science is marching ahead these days, my dear young lady. Different methods for everything. The women have more time to get sick, too. Anything wrong, they send for me. Not because it's me, of course, but they like having a man around, in their bedrooms, delicious impropriety, yet quite permissible. How they do try to charm me! And the things they tell me! Now that I've gone in for psychanalysis the cases range from compound imagination to real insanity, with egocentricism at the base of most of them. I can't tell you her name, of course, but one of my patients . . ."

Dr. Stanton launched into a case—a woman who hated her husband, had had several affairs but had maintained an outward semblance of domesticity. Now she had a bad case of nerves, wanted to leave her husband but had nowhere to go. So now she was being analyzed, to make her like her husband well enough so she might continue to allow him to support her.

"She'll stay with him, of course. She has no money nor ability to do anything and no one else wants her. The poor husband is fond of her. She's a cold proposition—she's looking forward to the time when her husband has enough

money to give her alimony—she'll leave him, then. Laziness and a vacant mind, the thing that's the matter with most women who have nerves. She likes me to talk to her, flatter her with the usual patter. Man's a fine fellow, if he were left alone. Another case, Mrs. G. is in love with another man—sometimes the cases are transparent, a few simple dreams to interpret, an easy solving—some cases, really serious, paranoia, dementia precox, ego-centricism magnified—that's what we're trying to prevent."

Leota listened. She liked this. Then, Dr. Stanton, interested in his work, quite sure he had an interested listener, went deeper into his pet subjects, he left psychanalysis, with its interesting cases of husbands who hated their wives, complexes, repressions and neuroses and went deep into blood cultures, tissue transplantations, an interesting case of advanced contracted kidney—really remarkable to have had the advantage of attending it—and Leota lost her appetite for dinner. She couldn't eat another bite. It was foolish of her, of course. The things Dr. Stanton told were things she shouldn't have felt so squeamish about—she should have been broad-minded, she knew—but sentences—tuberculous effusion, old pleuritic adhesions—well, dinner was spoiled.

Dr. Stanton enjoyed his dinner. He talked as he ate, the influenza epidemic—complications not ordinarily found—a bloody mucopurulent discharge—patient recovering all right, now—another case, a little child, slight perforation in anterior fold of left ear—

Of course, she should have felt flattered, Leota knew that—wasn't Dr. Stanton being confidential, telling her about his most interesting cases—but her appetite for an awfully good dinner was spoiled.

After dinner, in the living room, Dr. Stanton played the piano. He played quite well, much better than Leota. Then he talked about his work again, the women who came to him, stupid, ego-centric, self-centred, wanting to get away from the real issues of life, women who hate their husbands because the husbands are not earning enough money, haven't enough sex attraction, women who haven't brains enough to have outside interests—

Leota saw all women as Dr. Stanton regarded them—on pins in a laboratory, not pretty and clever and human, but cases—interesting or dull. He told her the sorts of things he was compelled to tell his patients—similar to the things he had told her last year—soothing them by trying to get them interested in other things, away from themselves, flattering them into normality, trying, as a priest might do, to patch up family quarrels, to bring together the broken edges of pitiful little domestic groups. Cases—cases— A—Mrs. C.—why, Dr. Stanton wasn't human—he could see right through her, through her miserable little conceits—see if her heart was all right—her kidneys—her lungs—her brain—she was just a chart to him, a case, ready to cut into.

"It has been delightful of you to let me come to see you," he had risen and was bowing over her hand again.

"It is so good to get away from the woman with a problem, to meet a charming, normal person like yourself, healthily alive. I did enjoy our little chat. You'll have dinner with me next week? I have several confinements due during the week—I dare not make a definite engagement now — may I 'phone you Monday or Tuesday?"

Was she like those other women—a nothing, a problem, a Mrs. C. who hated her husband?—Leota went to sleep in an orgy of cases, blood tests, operations.

CHAPTER XV

It was Thursday afternoon. Jeddy was coming to call. Leota retouched her eyebrows and lips for the dozenth time. She turned her head to the right, wondered if she were really getting lines under her chin—wasn't there really a wrinkle on the side of her face near her ear? They say the first wrinkle comes there. Did the tiny wrinkles that

were around her eyes and mouth show, if one didn't look too closely?

She was in a fever of excitement when the bell rang. She powdered nervously again, put down her long-handled, monogrammed mirror, when she heard Katie answer the bell. She had been so afraid the telephone would ring instead—that he wouldn't come—what if—now, maybe he did care a little—

"Jeddy," she said, with her gayest smile, as she went forward to meet him.

The eager boy she had visualized all these years was gone. She saw a tall man, with rather a tired, lined face, who looked older than his thirty-five years.

"How do you do, Leota," he said, rather solemnly.

"Shall we go in here?" said Leota, leading the way into the living room. She was rather ill at ease, she found. She didn't know just what to say. She had planned things differently.

"It's—it's good to see you again, Jeddy, after all these years. Were you surprised to get my note?"

"Yes, yes, quite surprised. And how are you and—and Mr. Clifford. Quite well, I hope. Is he at home to-day?"

"Oh, no, he's in England, you know, on business."

"He isn't here—at all?"

"Why, no. Now tell me about you. What are you doing? How is the world treating you?"

Gradually, Leota saw that Jeddy relaxed. She breathed a bit easier. When Katie came in with the tea things she served tea prettily and was able to eat quite a number of little cakes—she always served the kinds she liked best and had tried to have an especially nice tea for Jeddy.

There was little to talk about. Jeddy hadn't seen anyone from Westmont in months—in two years to be exact—no, he didn't get the Westmont papers—one grows so away from one's home town, doesn't one—it was years, now—

As he talked, Leota knew what had been the matter. Jeddy had dreaded coming—he had been, well, afraid. Jeddy was getting ahead, socially. He felt that he was quite above Leota, he didn't want anyone from Westmont clinging to him—holding him down, an old sweetheart might be dangerous. He had come to tea to find out what Leota had wanted, he was worried at her note, her telephoning. Now that he found Leota had no real motive except friendliness he was relieved, though still the snob and the climber.

As Leota saw how Jeddy felt, she rose to an appreciation of her position, of Will. Why, Will was worth two of Jeddy, quite as good looking, manners as good, too, not nearly such a snob—and Will's position, clubs—why Will—

Usually Leota did not brag, she never thought of it. Now she felt herself saying little things, things about Will, about the people who entertained them, about the decorator who had done the apartment, conceited things, insufferable, of course, but the things Jeddy understood.

"I had been so interested in seeing you," she said, smiling, "to see what the years had done to you. There ought to be an old-home week in Westmont, when we could all go and see old friends—and then be glad that things happened with ourselves the way they did."

She was glad when Jeddy went away.

But, after he had gone for a little while, she cried. It seemed, now, that she had been wanting to cry for weeks. Yet, at first she didn't know what she was crying about. Not because Jeddy had turned out to be so impossible. Why, he had always been hard, a bit climbing, selfish, not especially handsome. Not about Jeddy, not even because there were no more men to be nice to her. It wasn't that—for Denning had telephoned yesterday, while she was out, Frederickson had telephoned the day before, Dr. Stanton would telephone, Wilmott, even, had written a note—they wanted to be entertained, invited to dinners. She had run after these men, she knew. There were none of them who really cared for her, who were interested, sincerely—

there was no one, anywhere, who really was interested, but Will.

—No, she wasn't crying about Will, about the cage. For, now, there wasn't any cage—she could be free, if she wanted to. It wasn't because she was just a case, one of Dr. Stanton's selfish, stupid women. It was more than that. She knew she was selfish, self-centred. She knew she couldn't earn her own living, except in some terrible, scrubby way, if she tried. She knew she had no artistic knowledge or ambition, didn't like artistic people, had nothing to say to them. She knew she hated the kind of life Roberta led—the ugliness of it—she knew Will bored her—but—why, that was it, of course.

Will did bore her—she was caged—but she was used to it! Now Will wasn't here. It was Will she wanted—stupid, heavy, of course, tiresome certainly—but she hadn't anyone else. No one else interested her or was interested in her, for that matter. Why, Will did so much—little things—flowers, candy, this apartment—he wanted so little in return. Will, patient, kindly, what if he were dull—why, even now, in England, there were other women, anything might happen—what if she had to be alone, free—

Why, of course she was caged—but she needed the cage, its comforts—she would be helpless outside—she had no wings—she couldn't fly—the cage was the nicest thing she knew.

CHAPTER XVI

Two weeks more, alone, no one to tell things to at dinner, no one to tease, to talk to, interested, flattering—two weeks more—

Well, there was Will's sister—she was like Will, dependable. She would listen, when Leota talked. She knew she couldn't stand it—this way—eating with awful men or in terrible restaurants—or all alone, at home.

She dried her eyes. What if they were red—there was no one to see—She walked over to her desk, pulled out a sheet of monogrammed paper, started a letter:

Dear Ida:

As you know, Will is in England and it will be several weeks before he returns. I think it would be jolly if you. . . .

THE FRUITS

By Dorothy Burne

THE old folks murmur and shake their heads
And they say, "You'd best beware,
For though the blossoms of Love be sweet
Love's fruits are sorrow and care."

But I laugh as I shake the boughs of Love
Till the blossoms drift at my feet;—
For how can Love's fruits be bitter
When the blossoms are—oh—so sweet?

THE CHAMELEON

By Thomas Beer

I

MY first meeting with Angelica was pleasant, although not seemly. She advanced into a half-moon of firelit relatives with rather a swagger, complaining loudly of a shortage in nightgowns. Angelica was seven at this time and more than inclined to stoutness.

The relatives smiled with some restraint, rattling their after-dinner coffee cups. Angelica's mother moaned and I giggled. A horrified, pursuing nurse wrapped Angelica in something and took her away. I think she was spanked on the stairs. Certainly, she yelled and if this was one of her earliest impersonations, it was almost perfect. She sounded exactly like an irritated steam engine.

This led me to remember Angelica. The next time we encountered each other was in my fourteenth summer. Supported by her parents and her brother, the virgin came to stay a week and I admit that she alarmed me. The Kenyons were jolly, emphatic, handsome people and they burst upon us in a rather tumultuous fashion, with several attached dogs. But Angelica gave me a flaccid hand and said, "Ah, yes, how d'you do!" in a tone of weary sorrow. Her hazel eyes wandered desolately off past my head toward some unguessed point of the library and fixed themselves on it, with a bitter, baffled flickering. She coiled herself into a basket chair and ate only five cakes at teatime.

"What on earth's the matter with the kid?" I asked her brother Hamish, when we were going to bed.

Hamish responded, through his undershirt, that nothing was wrong.

"But she acts as if she'd lost her last friend," I argued.

"Oh—that. Oh, she's doin' Mrs. Varick," Hamish grinned.

"Who's Mrs. Varick?"

"She's a friend of mother's. She's English. Her husband's explorin' the North Pole—or South—anyway, he's been gone a devil of a while and she's worried. She was stayin' with us."

The next morning, I discovered Angelica on one of the garden benches, her ankles straightly crossed, staring in a ghastly manner at a rosebed. At small intervals, she passed a hand across her brow, then drew a little smoke from one of her father's cigarettes into her mouth and puffed it out again.

As she had not heard me and there was no other possible witness I excused her of any attempt at showing off and sat hopefully down on the turf and waited for her to be sick. But she was, perhaps, hardened to the taste of tobacco.

I grew restless presently and strolled up.

"H'lo, Angelica," I remarked; "want to play tennis?"

She drew her gaze from the roses and lent it to me briefly.

"I don't care about sports, Donald," she sighed.

"My name's Roger," I snapped. "An' you know it!"

"Is it?" said Angelica, dreamily. "It doesn't matter."

She selected another mark and stared at the greenhouse.

There has always been an utter sin-

cerity in these passages. I looked at Angelica with awe and backed off. She maintained her lamentable posture, even when she knew I was gone.

"Oh, as soon as she finds somebody else," Hamish assured me, "she'll cut it out. She does, y'know."

"But—what does she do it for?"

"Dunno," said Hamish, carelessly. "Lasts about a month."

I think it was her choice of the garden as a solitude which launched the next phase. It happened that our neighbour was an artist of the successful sort. He worked out of doors, very often, and had a booming, pleasant voice which frequently swept over our hedge and as his servants were all male and his wife very deaf, he allowed himself quite a free choice of phrases. Also, he often whistled.

It was the whistling in the upper hall that drew my attention to one of Angelica's most startling effects.

I knew she was upstairs, getting ready for luncheon and I was sitting on the stairs, as the guests for this shindig —a very staid lawyer and his wife— bored me fearfully. Angelica began to whistle "Sole Mio" in a luscious series of slides, squeezing all the melody from the thing to the last trill.

Hamish, in the hall below, raised his head, interested and suspicious.

"Is that the kid? She's got another one!"

Angelica stamped down the carpetless treads, her hands in her skirt pockets, at a jaunty gait and gave me a friendly kick in passing.

"When the blue hell do we eat?" she inquired, using a note of her lower register. I gasped. Hamish choked.

"Kid," he said desperately. "Cut it out!—anyhow don't talk!"

But she stalked into the library like an entering heavy-weight champion, and we began to expect the worst, directly, as luncheon commenced.

I think it was during consomme that the first eruption broke. The topic of boarding-schools had drifted to the surface of the tedious meal and Judge Brinkley turned his legal beams on Angelica.

"I expect you'll be going away to school one of these days."

"Damned if I do," said Angelica, baritone. "Heifer paddocks! They—"

I don't think Judge Brinkley quite caught her sentence. There was a wavelet of dismay. I gripped the edge of the table and sweated apprehension. Mrs. Brinkley got the next jolt. She may have been curious about the child.

"Have you a governess, dear?" she asked.

"Yes, and—Jesu Marie!—of all the damn'd nuisance! She—"

"Angelica," said Mrs. Kenyon in the dry voice of doom, "go upstairs at once."

Angelica swung on her heel in the doorway and pointed a thumb at her parent.

"You're the hell of a mother, you are!" she shouted and vanished. She whistled the hoochie-coochie ascending, and the success of her performance is still remembered by our cook, who crosses herself when Angelica is mentioned.

II

It was an evil day for the Kenyons when some misguided friend took Angelica to see Bernhardt in "La Tosca." Of course, she went stage-struck a dozen times. I forgot who was the model voluptuary of her worst offering. We had been doing the London theatres one June and from some enchantress she inhaled poison which burst into a rash of clothes in Paris. Hamish was the liberal fool, then. He was stupid enough to give her two thousand francs. It served. There was a positive swirl of turning persons in the Ritz lounge when she came down to dinner and Hamish went white.

"My—soul!" he muttered.

It was very awful. This was when the female shape had its most thorough exposition and some depraved dressmaker had seized Angelica for an advertisement. She tottered along, her head bent backward so that it suggested a

disease of the neck and seemed to be inspecting the rear of her right shoulder. Her body glimmered in a wrapping of purple satin and a profuse bloom of orchids grew on the middle somewhere, almost dwarfing a colossal fan of ostrich feathers. Several people rose in far corners and a number of cocktails spilled.

"Kid," said Hamish, between his teeth, "I won't go into the dining-room with you. That's flat! Go up and take that thing off, d'you hear?"

She gave him no particular heed, as I recollect it, but advanced on me, her naked arm sliding out like a serpent.

"So sorry, old thing," she declared, "but my beast of a maid's ill. I think the brute takes drugs. Shall we go in?"

She continued this sort of rubbish through half of dinner. Hamish fidgeted and writhed. Angelica had no maid, nor most of the other appanages she mentioned. These included a "place" in Scotland.

"Well, we're going to Switzerland tomorrow," Hamish groaned. "I can't stand this."

She gave him a look of satiate disgust and a dozen people chuckled.

"Switzerland's full of ghastly objects in June," she said. "Americans and that sort of thing. One can't go there."

"One can," Hamish grunted.

Our progress across France was a nightmare. Angelica hung herself with a batlike cloak of some slippery black stuff and painted her face arsenic white. Veils hid the innocuous yellow of her hair. She smoked cigarettes constantly in the station restaurant and five men tried to follow her into our carriage. At Basle, a fat Italian sent Hamish his card with an offer to buy her for fifty thousand lire. Fortunately, Hamish cannot read Italian. The worst was the episode of Max von Nilstadt.

While I think badly enough of German manners, in the princely sort, I have never blamed Max. He was a harmless young idiot with a bleating voice and a small court of tutors and equerries. I believe he was in exile after some scrape.

Angelica, in a cerise affair covered with sequins, dawned or exploded in his history on a terrace full of dowdy women, by moonlight. I remember that his jaw dropped.

"For the love of Pete," said Hamish, "stop looking at every man you see!"

"There's nothing else worth looking at, old dear. Women are such rotters, aren't they, Roger? I say, we might have a brandy and soda before we feed, what?"

She vented this wish immediately in front of the table where Max was experimenting with a cocktail. She gave it a very proper British twist. It sounded like all Piccadilly bottled.

"You little fool," said Hamish.

Max gazed upon her from a hundred angles until ten o'clock. He spied from behind palms and trickled out of doors in our wake. Hamish dragged her off to bed, then, and sat on mine with his head in his hands. We agreed that, some time, she would get into trouble. The prophecy came true in about five minutes. Angelica gave a well-developed merely American shriek, across the corridor.

Her account of the matter is that she only thanked Max for getting out of her way on the stairs. She confessed to having gone down again to buy some cigarettes. At any rate, we found him with his shoulders painfully jammed through the door and bleating. Angelica, leaning on the inside of her defences, was pounding his face with one hand and holding the doorknob with the other. Hamish extracted him by the coat-tails and slung him a few yards. I think he was glad to get away. We left next morning and Angelica imitated nothing for some months.

III

I HAVE never forgiven her exploit in the character of an empress or something equally stately when I took her to a ball at college and Hamish still cherishes a stiff finger he got, removing her from some objectors at a mass

meeting when she was a socialist. The trained nurse imitation succeeded her autumn at the Horse Show when she was aping Mrs. Rodney Bent. However, she met Mrs. Bent's brother-in-law, Randolph, at this time, and there ensued a normal career, quite natural, of characterizations. Many girls in love turn actress. Angelica was coy and cold and pensive in quite the ordinary way. She had Randy running and trotting after her about town and the Kenyons were pleased. Hamish was delighted.

"You know," he said, "a husband won't put up with some one different at breakfast every morning."

"We've put up with it," I warned him.

But the early days of the engagement passed without any dangerous symptoms. I lit the fire, myself, one afternoon while the trousseau was making. I met the girl for lunch and she looked fagged. So I took her to see Estelle Warren in "Pariahs."

Perhaps the change in her hair should have warned me. She began to arrange it in some fashion that hid her ears and presented nothing to the glance but smooth sweeps of yellow. Also her smile developed a sidelong, wistful droop. I thought it very pretty. The typhoon, of course, leapt on us at the last and worst second.

They were to be married in the country and I arrived an hour before the ceremony, went up to dress in Hamish's room and was surprised at not finding him. I was lacing my boots when he rushed in livid and silent with anger.

"You can take those things off," he managed after an evil moment, "there won't be any wedding. She's gone mad!"

He tore his gloves up, methodically, and threw them in the fireplace.

"As good a fellow as any girl could want—even if he *is* rich. Well, go and look at her—"

"Oh," I said hopelessly, "I may as well—"

I found Angelica in a loose and lovely chamber robe, embroidered in gold threads with queer tassels. It was very familiar, in some way. The maids and Mrs. Kenyon were huddled in a corner, weeping and sniffing.

Angelica, one arm spread on the keyboard of her piano behind her was trailing a cigarette in curves in the air. She gave me the sidelong smile.

"Now, what are you up to?" I demanded.

"Nothing. . . . But I've been awake all night . . . thinking." Her voice paralyzed me. "And I can't go on with this. . . . I can't go through with it!—If he was poor and we had to struggle I could go on with it, then— But this won't be a marriage. . . . A sort of petted slavery—a tame cat's life—A—"

"My God," said Hamish, slamming the door, "they can hear her downstairs!"

"And he'll get sick of me," she gulped, getting a hand on her throat; "nothing to look forward to—years of it—years of it!"

"As good a fellow as a girl could want," Hamish choked. "Oh, kid, you—".

"Can't go on with it—"

"Angelica," I said, "stop acting!"

"You've got to be married in half an hour," Hamish yelled. "She— Do you mean what you're saying, you damn little ass?"

"But—she's not acting."

Angelica had reached the point where Miss Warren sobs in the third act. I really wanted to see her do it but Hamish is practical and the strongest I know. He got hold of her wrists and began shaking Angelica so that the sob, having commenced contralto rose into a soprano squeal.

"Ham—let go—let go!"

Hamish went on shaking his sister. Her hair fluffed out of its secret fastenings and tossed about charmingly. Her great sleeves beat like the wings of copped moth. I think she tried to kick him. I was laughing too much to interfere.

"Ham! Ham—Oh, *please!*"

"Will you be—good, damn you?"

Angelica dropped on her knees. She said afterward that she was getting

seasick. I know she was frightened.

"Oh, please, Ham! . . . I've got to dress!"

"You'd better—you idiot!" he grunted, and let go.

She made the most beautiful bride I have ever seen but I have never been able to show Hamish the humour of this act. He is still suspicious and keeps waiting for an outbreak.

Indeed there have been mild spasms, but never useless, although she nearly broke down imitating a perpetual motion machine when the Red Cross started feeding troops at the stations. Her impersonation of a perfect Optimist was all that kept the Kenyons going after Hamish was announced seriously wounded at Cantigny. I gave her credit for it, the day he landed and telephoned me from Hoboken.

"Well," he said, "I suppose she's imitating a rocking horse to amuse the baby?"

"Your nephew," I stated, "is too young to be amused. She has to amuse Randy to keep him from reading the income tax."

His parents were in the South and I knew Hamish longed to see her more than anything else in the city. I told the driver to take us there and sent up only my card. I own that I was faintly afraid Angelica might improvise a part for him. She professes that one of her teeth never recovered from her wedding day. By and by we heard her singing upstairs.

"French," said Hamish. "She doesn't think she's a vivandière, does she?"

But he listened.

She sang, softly and graciously, an old foolish song about not going to the woods since the laurels are cut down—"*Nous n'irons plus au bois, les lauriers sont coupé.*"

I knew she was singing to the baby, in her white arms, since so softly, and she turned the landing post with her head a little bent. Queer, that she came down with her hair flowing under a draped veil. It had just been washed, actually, which accounts for the grey robe. But the window behind showed through the hair and the veil and made a golden mist and her face was grave, almost sad and her eyes obscured. She did not need a circlet of tawdry flame or stupid cherubim.

Hamish gave a thick sob.

This was, I think, the best of her imitations.

THE FLORENTINE LADY

By George Rowley

BRING me the mirror Benvenuto made
Of gold and amethyst and polished jade.
And I will dress my hair so that my face
Fits like a picture in the mirror space.

Last night, he bragged of Venice when he came . . .
Once, after Naples, it was much the same . . .
I know his ways—so well! Bring me the glass,
And I will change my hair, and let it pass. . . .

NEVERTHELESS I LOVE HER

By Jacques Yarnell

SHE is extremely egotistical. She is vulgarly vain. She is passionately avid of praise. She is irritatingly inconsistent. She is inordinately immodest. She is irritatingly irresponsible. She is utterly un-moral. She is fearfully frank. She is terribly tyrannical. She is unbelievably un-intellectual. She is curiously cruel. She is startlingly stubborn. She is dreadfully destructive. She is shockingly shallow. She wins her way by weeping. She is, frankly, full of feminine faults, foibles, and failings.

Nevertheless I love her; she is my little baby.

THE IDEALIST

By Marion L. Bloom

I DO not aspire to shine in the higher art circles.

I have no longings to be a Bernhardt, a Balzac or a Cezanne.

I am not dazzled by, or envious of the exquisite jewellery of other women.

Their gorgeous peacock gowns excite not a whit of jealousy.

The vulgar money flaunted by the wealthy maddens no greed within me.

I sneer discreetly at the members of my sex who preen themselves to attract stupid and blasé men.

These men leave me quite cold.

I am infinitely superior to all other humans and far, far richer than they.

On my dressing-table is an urn, a graceful Grecian urn, and in this graceful Grecian urn reposes the ashes of a lover, faithful to me for six delicious months; and whom I killed because he smiled a simple "thank you" to my maid.

A FOOL and her money are soon married.

THE FOREIGNER

By L. M. Hussey

I

FARINELLI was born in Naples, and before he made his escape to the United States he spent most of his time out in the Bay. He was the captain and the crew of a little sailing vessel, a clumsy example of a trawler. The boat was badly designed and a stiff breeze was a hazardous thing to manage, yet this never concerned Farinelli, who had something of an indifferent soul. He was employed by the owner to take the more adventurous variety of tourists out through the Bay to Capri, and then, with the continued favour of the gods, to bring them back again. Until the time of his flight he had successfully achieved this purpose several hundred times.

Then, through an absurd misfortune, he got into trouble with the Neapolitan police. A month or two before, he had met a young radical of some sort in a wine shop, a fellow whom he found with plenty of money, generosity and an agreeable disposition.

Farinelli, who had no concern with political ideas, understood very little of the doctrines expounded to him; but with an unconscious ear for eloquence he liked to listen to the young man's conversation; he was a person of more words than Farinelli. Then one day he was invited to attend a meeting of the radicals, and he consented from the pleasant prospect of being in the company of his new friend.

He knew nothing about the manœuvres of the society, and was wholly ignorant of the fact that the Secret Service, having had all these people under surveillance, had determined to arrest as many of the members as possible. He met his friend one evening in the wine shop and they set out together for the third-floor room over a restaurant, where the meetings were held.

They entered the place by way of an alley, went up a flight of back stairs, and passed into a room at the end of a dark, narrow hall after a conspiratorial series of knocks on the door. There were more than a dozen men in a very small space and they all seemed preoccupied with some extremely weighty concerns.

Farinelli was introduced; they clasped his hand eagerly and called him companion. His naïve soul was pleased with the friendly warmth of this greeting.

One after another they talked, sometimes with a great degree of fervour, and he admired the ease with which most of these men composed sentences. Speech was not a facile thing with him, and for the most part he was shy and inarticulate. They produced a demijohn of sour wine and everybody was free to fill his glass out of the bottle; Farinelli drank freely with the rest.

They had all been talking together for more than an hour, when he was startled by a sudden explosive noise like the detonation of a small bomb.

He dropped his glass and turned his head quickly: he was in time to see the splintered door fall inward and in another instant the police were in the room.

The others understood the significance and the consequences of this raid, and were on their feet immediately.

While he was still seated he saw a heavy chair, flung from the opposite end of the room, strike the first uniformed intruder like a grotesque projectile; the man fell back into the arms of the one directly behind him and the two went down together. Then the fight ensued with a startling suddenness.

So far no one had concerned himself with the two windows at the end of the room, and Farinelli was the first to reach them. He only vaguely understood the meaning of the raid, but he fully apprehended the necessity of escape. His own innocence would mean nothing if he were taken by the police.

He raised the sash with an impetuous violence; the glass broke and fell in a sharp little shower over his hands. He thrust his head out and looked up and down. Overhead was a ledge, running below the roof, that he believed he could reach by standing on the sill.

He pulled his body through the window, clinging by his fingers to the window frame. Releasing his hold for a precarious second, he instantly raised his arms and by good fortune they were long enough for his hands to grip the projection. With a raised boot he pushed down the empty window-frame and placing his foot on top of it, raised himself up. He could now grasp the edge of the roof and in a moment he was on top of the house.

For a few seconds he crouched there, panting and motionless. He peered over the roof; down in the yard he could make out a small group of dark figures and from these came the reports of revolvers, with little jets of ominous flame in the blackness. Several bullets flew close to his head; he heard the high-singing notes of their passage.

For a moment he thought that he must be the target; in another instant a man's head came up over the eaves and he understood that they were firing at this second fugitive. The face rose up out of nothingness, startling like an apparition, distorted like a tormented ghost. The two stared at each other for the briefest second. It was his young friend.

For a short space they were motionless, two prone figures on the roof, amorphous and inanimate in the darkness, like sinister drift-pieces awash on a threatening shore. His friend was the first to speak.

"Crawl back!" he whispered. "We've only a few minutes!"

They crawled on their hands and knees and the sharp cinders, loosened from the binder of tar, cut into their flesh; they were oblivious to the pain.

"I foresaw this sometime," muttered his friend. "I made plans for it. Crawl to the edge on the other side. We can drop down to the next roof. There's a window we can get in by. I think we'll have luck. . . ."

No more words passed between them. The drop to the adjoining roof was only a few feet. His friend, acquainted with the way, let himself over the edge clinging to the cornice; in a moment he disappeared through the window beneath.

Farinelli followed; now he could hear the thump of his heart underneath his coat. He lowered himself into the room and the other was waiting for him inside.

"I think we're safe here," his friend said. "We can stay here as long as we have to—a week or two if that's necessary. Why didn't I know these damn fools hit upon to-night? They certainly have descriptions of me, and probably of you too. I can get some money brought here. . . ."

Farinelli made no reply. His mind was stirring with a sullen resentment; now he was marked, like a criminal, and liable to arrest anywhere. He had done nothing, he understood nothing. His position was intolerable and incredible, yet he comprehended its grotesque and sardonic fact; he knew the police and he had no illusion that his fundamental innocence would in any way protect him. Inasmuch as he was a man who scrutinized only the primary facts of the life that came to him, never analyzing underlying causes and

motives, he was saved in these hours from a more flaming and disastrous anger. He began to accept the new conditions that were imposed upon him with a dumb and fatalistic resignation.

These two spent three weeks together in the small room. During this period Farinelli's friend elaborated a plan for flight to the United States. At first this seemed a very radical measure, but a final confession from the other man made it appear more reasonable.

"It won't pay for any of us to get caught," he said. "I had a revolver. I shot two or three of them."

The idea of emigration then took on another complexion. Farinelli, having no schemes of his own, consented to go. The money was being supplied him. He cut off his moustache, but let his beard grow. A new name and the birth certificate of a dead man were secured for him. The plan was to make their way separately to Venice and meet there.

One morning they kissed each other on the cheeks and separated. Farinelli never saw his friend again; he disappeared completely and obscurely, as a phantom might vanish out of sight; he went out into the crowd in the early hours of the day and was gone, so far as he concerned Farinelli, for ever. What became of him? Farinelli never knew . . . the police . . . an unguessed, tragic accident . . . merely a change in plans? The knowledge of this fate was denied him.

He sailed in the steerage of a small transatlantic steamer. Some of his companions in the passage were honest men with their wives and their children, transparent in their aims and purposes; others, like himself, were enigmatical and unknown, false in their names, inscrutable in their goals, traversing the sea to a new land, the fathomless sea that in itself was the symbol of their sinister and incalculable exodus. They came into New York and for a time were herded together in the quarantine. Then Farinelli found himself liberated in a tumultuous and unknown city, surrounded by an uncomprehended clamour, knowing nothing of the speech that entered into his ears, and abandoned, like flotsam in a current, to the unguessed destiny of his fortunes.

II

He made the acquaintance of an honest fellow who had come from a little town on the Adriatic in the state of Abruzzi. He was here with his wife and a vociferous colony of small children; he worked as a labourer on the railroad.

Farinelli rented the part of a room from him and through his assistance secured a job at the same work. The two went out together early in the morning and returned after dark.

Inasmuch as Farinelli had no one to care for but himself, and no one to save for at home, he now had plenty of money. His business was to shovel up the cracked stone ballast of the tracks and level it off.

At first the nice requirements of the section boss annoyed him; later he took a certain pride in making an exact alignment of the outer edge of small stones until, looking up the track, each stone lay within a precise line, as if it had been placed there by a mathematical measurement. But essentially there was little joy in this work; often he thought of the blue transparency of the Neapolitan sky, the aquamarine Bay, the approach to the cliffs of Capri, with white breakers rolling up like intricate lace on the sun-drenched rocks. Already he was planning to go back; he waited for the opportunity of return with the illimitable patience of his unemotional heart.

The winter came, and these were his most disagreeable days. He was unused to snow, to wet, to hostile cold winds, to skies overcast. His natural taciturnity increased, he made no friends, he talked to no one, he suffered from a dumb nostalgia. But he was a reliable labourer and during this season, when repair work was at a mini-

mum, he was kept in employment clearing the tracks of snow.

March came; it rained every day, but there was the indefinable promise of better weather suggested in the air. The old work began again and the section was shifted further out of the city. His landlord moved to a little town in New Jersey and Farinelli went with him. Now they occupied a small house, an ancient frame structure, full of minute, pestilential bugs, with which they shared the building in unconcern. Here Farinelli had a room to himself.

He worked every day as usual. He thought very little about himself; he had little to say to anyone. Thick and square, like a Roman soldier, swarthy of face, with his jetty hair and his jetty eyes, he had the appearance of a brigand, he looked romantic and suggestive, the entertainer of intrigue, the enacter of obscure and unrelenting vendettas; yet his appearance lied, his simplicity was childlike.

He accepted all the new conditions of his life like a fatalist, without question, with nothing save a vague and wordless regret. He only occasionally felt the immense difference of his new environment that in such moments expressed itself to him not so much in the novelty of his physical surroundings—the appearance of streets, the character of buildings, the minutiæ of customs—as in an underlying apprehension of hostility to him in all these alien people with whom he mingled.

Sometimes when groups of small boys jeered at him because he was a foreigner, when a passing man stared at him inimically, when a woman looked at him with a mingling of pity and contempt, a certain brief fear came into his heart, the fear of the unknown, the terror of incalculable and uncomprehended forces. But usually his mind was aloof from such qualms; he worked hard all day, he ate heartily in the evening, played a little while with his friend's children, helped drink a kettle of beer at bedtime, and slept through the night with a sound dreamlessness. He had very few diversions, there were none in particular that he desired.

Farinelli enjoyed the hour of liberation at night better than any of the other moments of the day. Next to this he appreciated best the half hour at noon, when he was free to go off by himself, eat his lunch, lie flat on the ground, his back in the grass, his face in the sun. At these times he often thought of his old life.

One day in the summer, sitting beneath a tree, he had just opened his rectangular tin box and spread his lunch at his side, when he heard a step behind him. Someone stopped; there was a soft, sibilant intake of breath.

Farinelli turned; he was surprised to see a girl staring at him. Her clothes were mussed and dishevelled; there was a rip in her skirt; her shoes were muddy; her yellow hair was loosened and half hung down over her neck, as if someone had recently shaken her. There were smudges of dirt on her face, which was young, childlike, and singularly devoid of expression.

She stood motionless, looking at the man in the grass blankly, like a badly cared-for image from a wax-works. Farinelli looked back at her, expecting her to speak.

"*Comme?*" he asked at last. "*Di cosa si tratta?* What you wan', Miss?"

Now she began to smile at him, coaxingly, ingratiatingly. Her white, even teeth made an ivory line between her curved lips. She put out her hand in a hesitant gesture; she withdrew it; she continued to smile.

"What you wan'?" he repeated.

She seemed to overcome an obscure reluctance, an uncomprehended fear. She moved forward swiftly and sat down beside him.

"Give me something to eat," she said.

Farinelli was surprised and shocked. He was elemental enough to understand the simple urgency of her appeal. This was a circumstance, a condition, within his comprehension and experience; at other times he had been hungry himself.

For the moment he allowed himself no questions; he was naïve enough to give action the ascendency over curiosity. He broke off a large irregular piece of bread, selected a lump of hard cheese, put the cheese on top of the bread and handed it to her. She took it, held the bread in one hand and the cheese in the other and began to eat immediately. She said nothing and the man, forgetting about the rest of the food, sat and watched her.

Her presence and the cause of her condition were incomprehensible to him. He had very little imagination and was unable to postulate upon the mystery of her arrival, her evident hunger, her unkempt appearance, the singular innocence of her manner.

He examined the external details of her person and they told him nothing. He was a poor estimator of ages—he thought she might be between seventeen and eighteen years old. He saw that she was pretty and this pleased him. She had round, smooth cheeks, very fair, very pale. Her hair was abundant, the colour of yellow wines. Instead of the expected blue, her eyes were brown; they contrasted with the pallor of her face and the fustic brightness of her hair. She had the full lips of a child.

He examined the external details of all the bread and cheese and then he gave her what was left. She ate this too, somewhat more slowly, with less intent eagerness, pausing occasionally to smile at him. When she had finished he handed her a tin-cup full of water; she drank half the cup and then gave it back to him. Dropping her hands in her lap, she sighed with content.

"I feel better now," she said.

Farinelli knit his brows over the difficult business of talking to her in English and began to question her.

"I like to know why you here?" he asked. "Why you have nothing to eat this way?"

"I don't know," she said.

"Ah? Who are you? Where you live?"

Her mouth drooped; she twisted her lips into a grimace of helplessness; her eyes looked at him with appeal, as if in remonstrance and in pleading.

"Oh, I don't know," she said. "Please don't ask me all these things. I don't know. I'm very tired. Don't you like me?"

It was a direct question; he was suddenly regretful that he could have worried her; he hastened to answer.

"Yes, yes," he said.

Her head dropped a little to the side; she touched her cheek with her small hand in a gesture of weariness.

"I'm terribly tired," she said. "Take me home with you. I want to sleep."

Again his curiosity was mastered by the appeal of her elemental necessities. He sat motionless for a moment, thinking. She looked at him trustfully, waiting for him to speak, waiting for him to act.

In the silence of the noonday he heard sharp metallic sounds not far away; the men were beginning to work again.

Suddenly he stood up, straightening his hat that had been tilted over his eyes.

"You wait," he said. "See? You understand? You stay here!"

She nodded obediently. He looked at her a moment, hesitant, not sure that she had heard him. Then he hurried off through the grass toward the railroad tracks.

He looked back over his shoulder and saw her still seated underneath the tree, her hands in her lap, her head bent forward a little, her shoulders flexed, her body motionless, her attitude one of dumb patience. Half in the shadow of the leaves, half in the gilding sunlight, she looked pitifully fragile and alone.

Farinelli ran down the short declivity to the tracks and she was lost to his sight. He approached the group of labourers quickly. The section boss was standing with his hands in his pockets, a cold pipe in his mouth, watching them.

Farinelli hurried up to him, took off

his hat, and began to talk volubly, in his own tongue.

"I mus' go this afternoon," he said. "Excuse me this time. You see, it is so necessary; it is ve-ry important. Certainly, I be on time as always to-morrow. You see, I can't stay no more to-day."

The boss looked at him for a moment in silence. Farinelli was a good man.

"All right," he said.

He returned his hat to his head and half running, went back the way he had come. He was uneasy lest the girl, misunderstanding his departure, should have gone away. He felt obliged to assist her. Her helplessness, whatever might be its cause, aroused his compassion.

He ran up the bank from the track and looked eagerly across the tall grass toward the tree. She was sitting where he had left her, half in the shadow, half in the sun.

III

Because her father was a man of some prominence, the disappearance of the girl had been followed by a considerable public furor. The newspapers published her pictures; private detectives searched for her; the police, under accusations of inefficiency, were active.

Several theories were advanced; the most favoured had a sinisterly romantic character. It was assumed that in some way she had been enmeshed in the underworld, entrapped and enslaved, a victim of the exploiters of young girls. This hypothesis made agreeable newspaper copy.

Everyone knew the facts, so far as they were known, of her disappearance. She had recovered not long before from a severe illness and was in the habit of walking out every afternoon for the sake of exercise. One afternoon she left her home as usual, and by nightfall she had not returned. Since she was never absent in this way, inquiries were begun at once. All her acquaintances were telephoned; no one knew anything of her whereabouts, no one had seen her.

In the morning the police were acquainted with the case; by the afternoon the newspapers published the first facts.

Several days of futile search passed and hypothetical analogies were drawn; the histories of other cases were revived; the facts connected with other young women who had vanished were recalled. As a reward, a large sum was offered for any information concerning her condition or whereabouts. This availed nothing. More than a month, a month of rumours and false hopes, passed without the slightest word of authentic information.

And then, as suddenly as she had vanished, she was discovered. It was assumed that she had passed through experiences so dreadful that they had unbalanced her. Specifically, she was sane in every way, save that she recognized no one, her father, her mother, no member of her family. In this respect her memory was gone, utterly.

But the actual fact, unknown to any person, was that she had suffered this loss of all knowledge of herself on the very afternoon of her disappearance, and it was the fact itself that accounted for her vanishing. Doubtless the sudden onslaught of this condition was a sequel of her illness, some unguessed pathological reaction of the disease upon her nervous system. Or, as such attacks sometimes are, it may have been unaccountable, an inexplicable catastrophe, an unfathomable malady.

She was walking along the street, slowly in the summer afternoon, in the full knowledge of her identity, her condition of being, her relations with the material world when, as if an unseen and sinister hand had sponged the faculty of recollection from her mind, she knew none of these things. She scarcely appreciated a change; only a vague sense of emptiness and bewilderment. She could not understand why she was out on the street; she wondered where she was going.

She paused, frowning a little, hesitating, looking about her. No reason for her immediate surroundings came to her mind. She began to walk on again, more slowly now, puzzled and speculating. A suburban trolley passed her and it occurred to her suddenly that she wanted to go out into the country. The idea satisfied and relieved her; she concluded that this had been her intention all the time.

She waited at the corner for the next car, and when it came she got on quietly and took a seat. She looked out of the open window, enjoying the motion of the car, the passing streets, and, presently, the appearance of detached houses and fields of young grain and yellow hay. She quite forgot her momentary perturbation. She rode to the end of the line and got off the car with no specific purpose.

She began to walk, passing through a suburban town to the open country. To stroll along the road delighted her; she liked the freedom of it, the sweet smell of the air, the warm sunshine. It amused her to see the little clouds of dust kicked up by her feet as she walked. She could not remember having done anything like this before; it was novel, it was agreeable.

The sun went down behind the fields and the warm twilight settled about her like a garment. She was walking much more slowly now; she was growing tired. Presently she came to an orchard full of small peach trees, and climbing the rail fence she picked some of the peaches and ate them eagerly. They did not entirely satisfy her, but no place occurred to her where food might be secured. Now it was growing dark. She sat quietly for a time, under the trees, wondering what she wanted to do.

After a time she got up and crossed through the orchard, making her way toward a clump of woods that was visible to her not far away. She found the woods dark and this frightened her a little, but at the same time the utter stillness of the place charmed her and she was anxious to draw in full breaths of the pleasant air that smelt aromatically of the earth.

She followed no path, but pushed through the low underbrush, pausing now and then to disentangle her skirts from the thorns of blackberry bushes growing wild in long tenacious brambles. Presently she came to an immense hemlock that lifted itself straightly from the earth and the bushes, topping the other trees like a sentinel. All the ground around this tree was soft and matted with fallen needles, a thick pad of them, the accumulated, uninterrupted deciduary of many years. The needles yielded noiselessly under her feet; she sat down with a tired sigh. It seemed remarkable that she had come so far, that she had not noticed her immense fatigue. She lay prone on the bed of needles and in a few moments passed into sleep.

It was late in the morning when she awakened and she was aware immediately of an insistent hunger.

Now it began to trouble her that she was in the woods; surely she had somewhere to go, had some means of securing food. She left the hemlock tree and pushed through the brambles again and after a few minutes of walking came to the edge of the trees. The prospect opened out into a field, and across the ploughed land she could see a man working. He was accompanied by a large dog and the animal, scenting her presence, came bounding through the furrows, barking. His rush frightened her and she fled back into the woods, her heart beating fast, her face blanched, regardless of the thorns and bushes. Now the dog was no longer barking, and she sat down on a fallen log, taking in her breath in quick nervous, gulps.

She felt immensely alone, unaccountably deserted, in some unfathomable way left without friends or protection. She began to cry, and the tears ran down her cheeks and dropped to the ground that sucked them up eagerly as if to hoard and treasure the evidence of her distress. Then, as her eyes grew dry, she stood up again and

began walking through the woods in the direction opposite to the man and the dog.

Once more she emerged, and this time, sitting in the grass underneath a tree, she saw a man eating. She felt reassured. He would help her, he would give her food. She approached him quietly, and stood behind him a moment, looking at the pleasant sight of white bread and yellow cheese laid out beside him.

Then he turned his head and spoke to her.

IV

In his simplicity, Farinelli regarded her as a gift of God. He accepted her advent absolutely, with scarcely a question, with little wondering. She came to him asking for food, relying on his compassion, yielding herself to his protection, and she was pretty and she gave him her smiles.

He only half apprehended certain singularities of her mind. She could not answer the inquiries he put to her; she could give him no data concerning herself; she said nothing about her past. But inasmuch as his English was quite rudimentary, the barrier of language restrained him from any ardent pursuit of her history and his own tendency to accept without argument the gifts of whatever single moment led him to pass lightly over her peculiarities. She was a pretty little woman; she looked at him with trust and affection; he was content.

That first afternoon he took her home with him and she sat quietly on a chair in the kitchen whilst he held an unusually voluble discussion with the wife of his friend. Presently they agreed upon terms for another room; three small children were shifted temporarily into the parlour and she was given possession of a small, cubical space that was entirely her own.

At this period Farinelli had no definite plans for her; his arrangements were temporary; he hoped to find out something about her. But the days passed and he knew no more than in the first moment of greeting her. Meanwhile these two grew in intimacy.

She was always eager for his return in the evening, and after a few days he found her waiting at the corner for him. When she saw him get off the car, she smiled with the sincere delight of a child; she slipped her hand through his arm; she walked at his side. He was proud of her prettiness and touched by her pleasure. With her, he used the endearments and diminutives he had always imagined for the woman whom he should love. He called her "tesoro mio" and "carina," and spoke of her little hands, the "manina." She asked him to explain the meaning of these words, and so far as he was able he framed their English equivalents. She was eager to learn his language; he purchased a primer full of pictures that bore some resemblance to life with the corresponding Italian words beneath them. In the evening she sat close to him at the kitchen table and gave these words a quaint pronunciation, forming them into droll sentences that made him laugh.

At the end of the first week he went to church and gave the *padre* some money for Saint Giuseppi, whom he thanked for guiding him to America. He lost his nostalgia; for the first time he was glad of his coming.

His mind went back in retrospect to his days in Naples, to the cause of his flight, to the seeming meaninglessness of his apparent misfortune. He almost achieved some philosophical thoughts; he developed a certain wordless awe of the divine providence; he seemed to sense the foresight and the inscrutable perfection that a higher power ordained for his life. He marvelled at the appointment of his destiny. The visit to church and the acknowledgment of the graciousness of his saint marked the stirring profundity of his groping thought. It was the first time he had admitted the faith since his arrival in an alien land.

After a week had gone by he became uneasy lest some claims should arise

that would take her away from him. With the passing of another week he was more assured; his superstitions gave strength and comfort to his assurance; he felt certain that she was his.

One evening as she sat near him endeavouring to shape her unused lips to the saying of strange words, he buried his fingers in her golden hair and kissed her. She returned his caress, she touched his cheeks with her soft hands, she pouted her lips for his further kisses. Her touch warmed his blood as if it communicated to him the living essence of all fragrance. He held her face close to his, and endearments passed his lips in a low continuing murmur.

"*Amata! Tu sei mi' unica amore! Diletta mia! T'amo, tesoro mio, t'amo!*"

It was with difficulty then that he made his wish evident to her understanding; he wanted her to marry him; at last she comprehended and like a pleased child she was acquiescent to his desire. Then, in a loud voice, he called his friend; he explained; they embraced each other. They produced a quart of red wine and drank it up together in celebration of the occasion.

Farinelli planned to take her to the city for the actual ceremony with also the additional idea that they could spend a few days there together. His friend was to go with them, and for the time they fixed an early day the following week.

Farinelli was boisterously happy; he slapped his friend on the back a dozen times; the two made a private bet as to the sex of the first child. The next day he made arrangements with his boss for a free week.

The trio took the train early in the morning and at their arrival in the station Farinelli with the girl separated from his landlord for a few hours with a subsequent meeting-place arranged. Together they walked out to the street, their arms linked. The air was warm, the sun caressed them both with the air of a gilding benediction.

Farinelli walked with his head thrown back a little, with his delight evident in the smiles that returned constantly to his lips. For the first time he felt a comradery and a sympathy in the crowds through which he passed; the sense of an incalculable hostility, of something vaguely inimical, of separation and contempt, passed from his apprehensions. He was glad to be here, in this city, in this land, with one of its women whom he loved close to him, touching him, listening to the words he spoke to her. His future seemed luminous, his destiny assured, his fate agreeable with delight, under the presidence of powers more astute than his divining. Every now and then he bent his head to his companion and whispered some word that brought the touching payment of her smile.

They had walked five or six blocks together; they had just crossed the street and were stepping up the curb; a heavy man lounging against a store window stared at them. His first glance at the girl surprised him; he looked at her intently, unbelieving. He had examined a dozen photographs of her when her father had first come to his agency and enlisted his assistance.

Then he turned his eyes quickly to Farinelli and her companionship with a foreigner convinced him. This must be the man responsible. They passed him; they had gone on a dozen yards or more before he straightened his body, clapped his hand to his hip to assure himself, and then strode after them.

He walked past the two and stared at the girl's profile for further assurance. No, he felt no doubt whatever. He stopped suddenly, turned around, and confronted Farinelli. The latter, surprised, unexpectant of such a manœuvre from one whom he had not even noticed, almost bumped into him. He flushed angrily.

"What you wan'?" he asked.

The detective grasped the girl's arm; she shrank from his touch. He thrust his hand down into his back pocket.

"Stand out there!" he demanded. "And by God, don't try to get away!

Don't try any games! Yours are done!"

The sight of the stranger seizing the arm of his beloved enraged Farinelli. He paused for no further inquiry. He lurched forward with an astonishing swiftness and agility, striking the face of the man in front of him with both his closed fists. He seized him about the body, he threw all his weight upon him; the two went down to the pavement together. A crowd closed in at once.

"Get him off!" screamed the detective. "That's the Farnum girl: look at her! I've got the man!"

Further utterance was impossible to him. Farinelli, his tensed muscles oblivious to the hands that sought a futile grip at his throat, seized the head of his antagonist in his enraged grasp as the preliminary of beating it on the pavement. Three or four men in the crowd stared at the terrified girl.

"The Farnum girl!" somebody cried. "Yes, look at her! That's her! Get the foreigner on top! The foreigner!"

"The foreigner! see; it's the foreigner!"

There was a brutal and appalling rush for Farinelli. In an instant he was torn away from his antagonist; a dozen new men, unknown to him as the first, unfathomable in their ferocity, attacked him. From the mob incomprehensible threats beat into his ears like the malign and savage turmoil of an inferno.

Madly, insanely, in a final desperation, with all the fury of his young strength, he sought to liberate himself from the enraged assailments that gyrated about him. For a second he was erect, the vortex of a maelstrom. In that moment, as in the swift vision of a drowning man, his old beliefs in this people's hatred and hostility, in their grotesque enmity, in their inscrutable malignity, came back to him in a heart-rending revelation.

With the passing of another instant he was thrown to the pavement; they beat his face with an unleashed savagery; they tore at his motionless hands; they kicked his unresistant body. When the police clubbed back the mob he lay tragically inert, a foreigner, unrecognizable, unknown. The girl, amazed, terrified, supported by a tall policeman, stared down at him.

In the morgue no one was ever able to identify his body, but the case aroused a brief public agitation against criminal aliens.

THERE are two kinds of women: those whom men like to confess their indiscretions to, and those who are the cause of the indiscretions.

TRAGEDY: To be a night-blooming cereus, which blossoms only once a year, and to be all alone that night!

A WEDDING ring is woman's *croix de guerre*.

THE GARGOYLE

By Richmond Brooks Barrett

I

"I SAY, don't you feel silly?"

He had meant to whisper but his vocal cords had played him false. He must have bellowed. The words seemed to echo and re-echo through the silent room.

The woman who sat beside him on the couch responded sweetly, "I am so glad to hear your voice. I was beginning to feel hysterical."

"So was I," he agreed. "What would people have said if we'd set up a giggle? I snort when I laugh, and that's so vulgar."

"This *is* a test of one's nerves," she said. "It's much more trying than a funeral."

He shifted his position and readjusted the pillow at his back.

"You are fidgeting," she protested. "You mustn't. If you don't stay perfectly still you will be a wreck at the end of an hour."

"This couch is so uncomfortable," he explained. "The springs don't work."

"They work beautifully over here," she replied. "You *are* fidgeting; don't deny it."

"I think I'll lie down flat on the floor," he threatened. "We're all blind; nobody would see me. But you must promise not to peek.

"I don't hear a sound," he announced suddenly. "Perhaps we are the only ones here. You don't suppose we've been forgotten, do you? It may be the middle of the night."

"We haven't been here fifteen minutes. Other people have enough self-control to keep quiet." She was stern.

"You have no imagination," he complained. "Or else you've got your eyes wide open. That would be dishonest."

He raised his right eye-lid a trifle and peered at his companion. He could see very little, except that she hastily snatched a handkerchief from her lap and covered the upper part of her face.

"Aren't you ashamed?" He spoke in hurt tones.

"I *knew* you were spying," she returned.

They laughed. His lid dropped back into position. They sighed.

"Will it never end?" She was plaintive.

"This business gives me the queerest sensations," he mused. "I can't believe I'm still inside my body. I seem to be floating around without it. Wouldn't it be terrible if I never found it again? Clothes are so awfully expensive to-day; I shouldn't like to lose this new suit."

"What was that sound?" She interrupted his flight of fancy.

"I'm afraid I yawned. I'm awfully sorry." He was contrite.

"Are there really other people in this room?" he asked.

"How should I know?"

"Oh, come, you *did* peek. Please tell me."

"The room is full," she let him know. "What must they think of us?"

"I don't care." He chuckled. "I think we're very amusing."

"We are certainly ridiculous," she said.

"Do you know, I have never acted like this before?" His voice betrayed bewilderment. "I can't account for it. In another minute I may find myself

proposing; and it *is* possible you're an adventuress."

"Adventuresses often have weak eyes." She was non-committal.

"I wonder if this stuff could make a man drunk," he ruminated.

"I haven't a doubt of it," she replied.

"I hope you'll forgive me," he pleaded. "I'm not always such an ass."

"We both have much to forgive," she assured him.

The sound of approaching footsteps brought them a pause. The man heard a polite whisper, followed by a creak from the couch. His companion had evidently risen.

"*A bientôt*," she murmured and was gone.

He smiled contentedly and settled back once more in his corner. Stretching his legs straight out in front of him, he yawned.

The next moment, it seemed, he was roused by a tap on the shoulder.

"The drops have been in your eyes for over an hour. Would you please step into the office?" said a voice.

He stared up in the direction the sound had come from and made out a white-clad figure.

"Have I been asleep?" he asked.

The nurse smiled at him through the yellow haze that enveloped everything.

"Stupid of me!" he exclaimed, and followed meekly in her wake.

II

THE man broke into a broad grin at the moment when the oculist's eye was glaring into his own from a distance of about a quarter of an inch. He had caught the sound of the woman's voice.

"Very well," she was saying, "next Tuesday at eleven."

"Thank you, Miss Delano," responded the nurse.

The next morning he called her. He had ignored the telephone directory.

"Of course," he had reflected, "a woman with such a well-bred voice would never have her number listed."

Central threatened to be stubborn.

"We have strict orders," she protested.

"But this is a matter of life or death," he urged melodramatically.

Central yielded.

His "Good-morning, Miss Delano," was rewarded by a laugh from the other end of the wire.

"Why have you trapped me like this?" she said. "Things went quite far enough yesterday. I should never have acted so if I'd thought—"

"You knew I was going to keep after you," he returned.

"How rude! But I *was* brazen; I suppose I must abide by the consequences."

"On the contrary, you were kind," he corrected her. "I was scared to death. You soothed me and before I knew it I was having a wonderful time."

"Don't gloss things over, please," she said. "It was a disgraceful pick-up, nothing more."

"Lay it to the belladonna," he suggested.

"I have been trying to, but my conscience won't hear of such an excuse. It is sticking pins in me at this instant. I must ring off."

"Oh, no!" He was ardent.

She relented.

"Are your eyes beyond repair?" she asked.

He settled down for a long chat. "My sight is perfect," he said. "I could read every letter on the placard with both eyes. It was most humiliating."

"And you're not to wear glasses?" She seemed anxious.

"Only to read with; and I never read."

"I am to wear spectacles all the time," she complained. "I am sorry I consulted the wretched man. I might have gone blind so gracefully."

"It's better to be blind than spectacled," he agreed. "Don't wear them."

"But nothing is so bad as to feel you've wasted money. I must put them on and go about hating myself till I die."

"Sometimes spectacles are becom-

ing," he ventured, in the hope of consoling her.

"Yes, particularly with a low-cut gown," she replied.

"Let me see you with them on," he said. "I will be frank."

"Thank you, I prefer to remain only a voice, so far as you are concerned."

"Oh, come, are you going to make this a disembodied courtship?" he pleaded.

"Of course." Then "No!" She caught herself up. "I mean to end things *now*. You mustn't call me up again."

"Very well." He laughed.

For reply, she hung up the receiver.

III

For over a month they talked to each other every day. The conversations became more and more intimate and of ever-increasing length. They argued over politics and music; they discussed marriage and divorce. They even wrangled about dying: he was afraid to die, but wanted a smashing big funeral; she considered it ridiculous to have fears on the subject and vulgar to be buried with pomp.

Then they fell ill at the same time. He kept to his bed five days; she did not get up for a week.

"I think it was a sign from above," he insisted "We should get married."

"Nonsense!" she returned. "Tuesday was stormy and cold. You rode and I shopped. Neither of us should have expected to be well on Wednesday."

"I was all right in forty-eight hours," he confessed; "but it was so jolly to lie in bed and talk to you all day."

"You are sending too many flowers," she reminded him; "the house won't hold any more."

"When am I to see you?" he kept asking. "You are like sweet Echo, sweetest nymph—and all that."

"I thought you never read?"

"I learned that by heart in prep school." He was unabashed. "I don't remember any more of it; those four words stuck somehow." He returned to the attack. "*When* am I to see you?"

"I don't know," she parried. "I am content."

"You can't hold me off much longer," he said. "I'm planning to spend my days on your sidewalk; and the first time you come out I will pounce."

"You might have to wait a week," she replied. "I very seldom go anywhere, now the opera is over."

"If I asked you to marry me, what should you say?"

"I don't propose to commit myself before you ask." She laughed. "That is unscrupulous, isn't it? Now you have no chance of escape."

"Good!" He took the cue. "Will you marry me?"

"I can't accept you until I know more about you. You may be disreputable."

"But I haven't time," he said; "I'm at the telephone so much, you know."

"Well," she returned, "I promise to think it over."

One morning she announced, "I leave New York next week for the summer."

His betrayal of disappointment was wafted to her over the wire. It sounded like a wheeze, so distorted had it become in transit. When it left his mouth it was a beautiful sigh.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"To Newport. My sister has a house there."

Another wheeze, just like the first, reached her. He had sighed again; but this second exhalation of breath had been of a different sort from the first. If the telephone in his study had been a trumpet, the air would have vibrated with a blast of triumph. A telephone is the poorest instrument conceivable for the transmission of subtly expressed emotion.

"How damned nice!" he cried. "I always spend the summer months in Newport. You can't escape me there. If you're human, you swim and play tennis and eat; and we all do those things in concert at Newport."

"I shall be fortunate if I get there

alive and sane," she said. "It is going to be a terrible train-trip."

"Why? It's not so bad, only a little tedious."

"You don't understand." Her voice held the note of tragedy. "My sister's baby and nurse are going with me. If the child were a girl, I shouldn't mind; but it's a boy and of course fretful and restless."

"What am imposition!" he exclaimed. "I shouldn't do it, if I were you. Is the baby delicate? It might die."

"No, it is healthy enough, but very ill-mannered. Oh, dear," she wailed, "I don't like babies."

"Neither do I." He stoutly supported her.

"My sister has appendicitis," she explained. "She can't be moved yet, but feels the infant has had enough of New York. Nobody is to blame; it's just unfortunate, that's all."

"When do you leave?" he asked.

"On Tuesday next."

"Please call on me, if there's anything I can do," he begged, as if the situation might develop complications that nobody but a man of strength and foresight could tackle.

IV

He had planned to stay in New York at least a fortnight longer; but after all, he decided, Newport *did* beckon. He had been growing restless, he told himself. Besides, the chivalrous thing beyond question would be to see the poor girl safely through her ordeal. He therefore wired Hill-Top to have his rooms ready on the following Tuesday night. Meanwhile, he continued to call Miss Delano every day.

"When are you moving to Newport?" she asked once.

"I can't quite make up my mind," he lied. "Some time before the end of June, anyhow. Will you write me every day? Or shall we wire each other?"

"But I don't know your address; I don't even know your name," she said.

He could tell by the way she spoke that she was curious.

"That's true," he said, and let the subject drop.

Tuesday at a quarter to one he boarded the train in the Grand Central. "They would never be able to get off on the ten o'clock," he had reflected. "They'll be on this."

The moment he entered the drawing-room he caught sight of a frothy bundle on a trained nurse's lap. A woman with her back to him was bending over the baby and anxiously examining it, as if on the hunt for symptoms.

"That's she," he murmured. "Poor girl!"

He turned to his man.

"I am going to sit in number twenty-one," he explained, pointing out the chair directly across the aisle from Miss Delano's. "Arrange it with the porter, will you?"

He slipped into place without a sound and swinging his chair about proceeded to peer through the window opposite. He did it skilfully; one would have thought his gaze went straight over Miss Delano's head and rested on the throng outside. As a matter of fact, his examination of the girl was an exhaustive one.

Before the train started, he had completed his scrutiny and had found there was but one epithet that adequately described her. She was—ugly.

"What a shame! What a shame!" he said to himself over and over again.

She was extremely thin, almost wizened. Her features seemed at odds with each other; they failed to make up the conventional pattern of the human face. Furthermore, she indulged, every few minutes, in the queerest, most eccentric squint imaginable. It was disconcerting.

They had reached Stamford before he had conquered his chagrin sufficiently to speak.

"Here I am, you see," he announced.

She frowned and winked nervously at him.

"I—beg—your—pardon?" she faltered.

It was obvious she recognized his voice.

"Yes," he went on. "I got a hasty summons. I had to jump on the first train that pulled out."

"Fancy getting a *summons* to Newport," she replied. "Such things don't occur. You are a shameless man."

A smile brought all her irregular features into play and lent them a certain charm. She spoiled the effect by a squint.

He turned his eyes to the baby.

"It's a splendid fellow," he remarked. "So quiet and sportsmanlike."

The infant bubbled blandly in his direction.

"Now that you've run me down," said Miss Delano, "confess you are sorry. You see, I am—ugly."

He felt himself getting red as he protested, "How absurd!"

"I shouldn't have said that," she returned. "It embarrasses you."

She gave him a droll smile; but he had already caught a note of resignation, a hint of bitterness, in her voice. She had read his disappointment.

He began to hate himself for his clumsiness and to admire the woman for her courage and fine irony. He realized with delight, as he returned the smile, that he was liking her better than ever.

"It's going to be a wonderful summer," he remarked.

His enthusiasm was genuine; there was no longer any restraint in his manner.

Within fifteen minutes, the two were gossiping and chatting at a furious rate. He watched every gesture she made and mentally set each down as fascinating. The charm of her conversation was heightened by the accompanying squints and grimaces. She was grotesque; yes, she was ugly; but she was none the less absorbing for that.

Suddenly they were startled by a scream near at hand. The baby had awakened from a dreamless sleep. He had apparently found not by any means to his taste the world upon which he opened his eyes. Being much refreshed by slumber, he was setting to work to voice his complaint against dirt and noise. The nurse, quite unconcerned, prepared for the fray.

"I had forgotten him!" cried Miss Delano.

"*I* had forgotten there *were* babies—or anything like that—in the world," replied the man.

The infant lay still for a time and contented himself with yelling; it was evident he was husbanding his strength. If the purpose of the outburst were to worry Miss Delano, it was succeeding gloriously.

"Oh, dear, what shall I do?" she quavered.

The nurse reassured her.

"This is nothing, Miss Delano," she said. "Don't be frightened. He acts this way every day of his life."

Miss Delano gave her nephew a few ineffectual pats and sighed her relief.

"I *was* frightened for a moment," she admitted.

The baby must have heard; rage at his nurse's infamous betrayal of him got the better of discretion. All his resources were called into action. He would show them this was no ordinary occasion; he would precipitate a crisis if it killed him. He proceeded to kick and struggle, to shriek and bounce about. By this means he succeeded in eliciting a look of vague terror from his aunt. Then he played his trump card.

"What shall we do?" cried Miss Delano and turned to the man in horror.

"Oh, I say," he exclaimed, "he's holding his breath."

Even the nurse began to lose her presence of mind. The child, its face already of an apoplectic hue, seemed in the grip of a paroxysm. If the truth be told, he had let his love of a dramatic coup carry him too far. He had lost his lusty breath and was finding it difficult to recover it.

"We are slowing down. Where are we?" gasped Miss Delano.

The man plunged to a window. "Kingston!"

"The child must have some air." Miss Delano started for the door, grasping the nurse by the shoulder as

she ran and dragging her and the baby along.

The train gave a jolt and stopped.

In a moment, the two women and the man were striding up and down the plank-walk outside the station, their eyes fixed in feverish anxiety on the baby in the nurse's arms.

While they still watched and trembled, the locomotive shook itself and tooted a warning.

The infant hiccoughed loudly; the crisis was past.

"Thank God!" said the man in fervent tones.

But the train had begun to move and, as he looked on in bewilderment, sped away with a clatter that sounded like a burst of Gargantuan mirth.

V

"THERE go our bags," cried Miss Delano. "And the child's medicine chest is in one of them."

"My man is wonderful," he replied. "He will see to the luggage. That's not what bothers me."

She got the ominous sound.

"What *does* bother you?" she asked.

"That's the last train for Newport to-day," he said. "I'm afraid you'll have to stay here at the station while I scare up quarters for the night."

"How ghastly!" She shivered.

"Don't worry." He gave her an encouraging smile. "I'll find something."

He returned in half an hour. The two women were sitting on a truck and swinging their heels disconsolately. The baby, fast asleep, smiled. The expression on his round face was positively ribald; at least, so Miss Delano judged it.

"I've got just the place for you," the man called out as he hurried up to them. "Two big rooms in a farmhouse. The morning sun pours into them, the woman says; and of course there'll be quarts of cream for breakfast."

"You *are* kind," Miss Delano almost whimpered. "I have never *wanted* to die until to-day. It would be such a satisfaction first to murder that baby. See it gloat!" she cried.

"Don't be so down," he protested. "I think it's a lark."

"A lark!" She groaned.

"Supper's ready," he went on. "I looked into the dining-room on my way out. Everything will be delicious, I'm sure."

"Then we're not to eat in the kitchen?" She brightened. "Won't you join us? I shall see that little Reggie eats his dinner upstairs."

"I was waiting for an invitation," he admitted. "They don't serve food at my farmhouse."

"You've found a place for yourself, too? I am so glad."

"Oh, I have found the most capital place. To-night I sleep in a feather-bed—"

"Epic, homicidal, six feet thick," she supplied, and laughed shamelessly at her own pleasantry.

"I am beginning to feel better," she said.

After supper, the nurse returned to her imperious charge; Miss Delano and the man went into the ridiculous sitting-room.

"I shan't stay long," he said—"just a few minutes. That is, until you've accepted me. You *are* going to marry me, aren't you? You'd better, even if you don't love me. We're hopelessly compromised."

She nodded a sage agreement. "Yes, I suppose there is no way out of it." She laughed. "You are absurd. Don't you know I've had designs on you from the first?"

He sat down beside her on the couch with a thump and grasped both her hands.

"These springs don't work either," he said. "Isn't it jolly?"

"It isn't right." She shook her head at the injustice of it all. "You are handsome and sweet; I am ugly and *so* cross."

His only answer was a kiss on her queer, crooked mouth.

"I wouldn't let you see me until we

were old friends," she went on. "The whole wicked scheme occurred to me that very first day at the oculist's. I peeked constantly; I saw how beautiful you were. Men *do* run away from me; I was determined you shouldn't."

As he listened, he couldn't but wonder if he should ever have appreciated her if he had not come to love her wit, and her voice before he had stood the shock of her physical peculiarities. He was finding something tonic now in her strangeness. What if he had known nothing about her before meeting her face to face? Would he not have thought her weird, perhaps too bizarre to be sane? Would he not have fled in amazement?

"I declare, she's a ripping, oh, an exquisite gargoyle," he told himself.

"How terrified I've been at the thought of our first meeting!" She shut her eyes at the recollection. "I knew you would be on the train to-day, of course; you didn't fool me the least bit. I left off my glasses on purpose; even you would have taken to your heels if I had worn them. As it was, I nearly lost you that first terrible minute."

"My God, but you *are* unscrupulous!" He laughed. "You didn't stick a pin in little Reggie, did you?"

"No, the sweet child seems to have felt instinctively that I *must* be compromised. I suppose even babies have a dread of maiden aunts."

"Tell me," he said, "do the spectacles correct that trick?" She had just squinted adorably.

"Yes," she admitted.

"Then for heaven's sake throw them on the ash-heap," he cried.

APPEAL

By Dorothy Yawger

I HAVE always laughed at women who lose their looks and their freedom for red, wailing mites of humanity. But to-day at the Red Cross, I bathed a baby for the first time and I tingle still at the memory—the satiny pink body that slid from my hands as I stretched unaccustomed fingers along the wee back; the tiny crumpled fists that beat aimlessly against me; the smooth round head that lolled back as the soft mouth puckered into bubbly gurgles; the pudgy dimpled feet that churned the water into frothy waves and kicked the soap from my fingers; the final dry-pattings and powderings as the little body rolled in gleeful freedom; and, best of all, the feel of the warm blanketed little form cuddled to me as I rocked it to sleep.

These things linger in my memory. I like to think of them. I shall speak to my husband. Perhaps I was wrong.

THE presents of men often account for the pasts of women.

CIRCE

By Louise de Salis

SHE was a plain looking woman who had neither fascination nor charm. But she had all the men.

And the pretty women wondered and wondered.

Until one pretty woman, bolder than the rest, hid in the plain looking woman's house.

To watch her tactics.

She heard the plain looking woman tell her maid that she was expecting two visitors that evening. One at nine o'clock and the other at ten o'clock.

And the pretty woman waited impatiently to see the preparations of the plain looking woman.

What kind of gown she wore!

What perfume she used!

Where was the great allure!

To the pretty woman's great astonishment the plain looking woman did nothing, not even changing the gown she was wearing, which was unbecoming to her.

And no perfume!

There were no rose-coloured shades in the boudoir.

And no flattering chaise-longue.

The pretty woman grew more and more bewildered.

* * * * *

The first visitor arrived. A big raw-boned *gauche* man, who had made his money in hides.

The plain looking woman asked his advice on the re-decoration of her rooms, and told him what a wonderful sense of artistic values he possessed.

He went away beaming with self-satisfaction.

The second caller was a thin under-sized man, whose mural decorations had made him famous.

She spoke of her great admiration of clean-cut men whose force was hidden but nevertheless felt, and her dislike of avoirdupois.

* * * * *

The pretty woman crept quietly away, wondering no longer.

IT is a great thing to go through life pursuing one's ideal—it is a greater thing to find one's ideal—it is the greatest of all things to know what to do with one's ideal when one has found it.

LOGIC: An excellent weapon for proving your opponent is in the wrong when you know he is right.

A KISS FOR THE OLD MARQUIS

By Gertrude Brooke Hamilton

I

CARÈNE and Pompey Gilfoil were in Naples. Carène had looked at the bay from their hotel, from the shores all along to Pompeii, and from the arid slopes of Vesuvius. Her humour was laconic. Pompey, on the contrary, found enjoyment in viewing the storied ruins and loitering through the shops, purchasing specimens of Neapolitan art in lava and nice little sketches of the South Italian seaport—famed for its follies and its sky-blue water.

Carène stood by a window of their suite, looking out at the night. The bay was surfless and every star shone in the heavens.

Pompey was reading aloud from a quaint volume he had just acquired; in his richly modulated, rather ponderous voice, he was reading her the love-story of Pergolesus, who, at the age of twenty-two, had died in Naples as he finished the last verse of his *Stabat Mater*.

Tracing a star on the window-sill with the tip of a slim forefinger, Carène's apathy had a fleck of tears; a whim, a mood, a what-you-will, had led her to suggest Naples to Pompey—ever so many years before, a great-great aunt of hers, a French *duchesse*, had sent vagrant footsteps echoing down the shady side of family history by making Naples her playground for an *affaire du cœur*, and Carène had foolishly hoped that she and her banker-husband might play at being lovers on the ground famed for picturesque follies. *Hélas!* in the dreamy, sky-blue seaport she had for a *vis-à-vis* a husband in cheerful pursuit of the commonplace!

Pompey's well-balanced voice read of how young Pergolesus and his beloved once knelt together at the passing of a *Corpus Christi* procession; sacred implements and symbols, canopies, swinging censers, tapestries of scarlet—

A sigh fell from Carène's pouting lips. She wilfully meditated upon the love-affair of her unholy little *duchesse*, who, at twenty-two, had run away from her *duc* with a gay *marquis*—relinquishing all for an idyl in Naples. Her forefinger idly traced a gay figure on the window-sill, an indefinite conception of a lover, young, playful, dreamy. She wondered—half yawning—if there were such a playfellow in Naples, or in all the world. *Comment donc!*

She said to Pompey, quite gently:

"Suppose you stop reading about Pergo and come and look at the stars—they are so bright this evening."

Pompey came to the window with his finger in the leaves of the romance.

"What a jolly old city this is, with all its mummified loves!" he exclaimed, standing beside her.

"Are all of them mummified, none of them living?" she shrugged.

"I know of one that's very much alive!" laughed Pompey, looking at her.

"I know of none," she sighed.

"That's somewhat unkind of you, my dear." Pompey went back to his chair by the reading-lamp.

She lighted a cigarette.

Blowing circles of smoke and breaking them with her fingers, she turned from the window. She sat among the cushions of a divan and smoked restively. "Read of Pergolesus, *mon cher mari*. And, to-morrow, let us leave Naples and return to New York—where the stars are less obtrusive."

Pompey watched the circles of ciga-

rette smoke rise above her shapely head.

"I'm sorry you're not having a good time in Naples," he said, soberly; "is there anywhere else you'd like to go, Carène?"

"No place on earth, Pomp." She put a cushion behind her head.

He found his paragraph on the page of his rare volume.

Before taking up the broken thread of the story he said, equitably:

"If you wish, we'll start for home to-morrow, dear; so don't fret about the Neapolitan stars."

Carène finished her cigarette and lighted another. After a while she turned her head so that she could see the stars. *Ah, l'étoile délicieuse!* She framed little smoke-kisses that floated to no one from her lips.

A modified knock on the door was followed by the appearance of Carène's maid, with a missive in her hand.

"What is it, Witherspoon?" asked Pompey.

"A note for Mrs. Gilfoil, sir."

The animated automaton that Carène had brought with her from New York moved forward with the letter.

Carène held out her hand for an envelope of superfine texture.

She put aside her cigarette and sat up among the cushions of the divan to examine the missive. The handwriting was that of an old person, for it had the curls and quirls of another mode. She turned the envelope over on her palm. The seal bore the crest of a marquisate.

"Is anyone waiting for an answer, Wither?" inquired Carène.

"No, Mrs. Gilfoil; the messenger did not wait."

Witherspoon withdrew. Carène broke the seal of the envelope.

"*Madame*"—the word was the perfection of elaborate chirography—

I have learned by a happy chance of your presence in a hotel on the Via Chiaia.

Because I am a very old man two fingers from death, and because, in my youth, I knew your charming great-great aunt, Antoinette, Duchesse de Brazac, I am making you acquainted with my presence here. I have been living in the Villa Ricordo on the Chiaia for a number of years.

Madame, the old may ask favours of the young, may they not?

Will you favour me by having Monsieur Gilfoil bring you some morning to my villa—that I may have the exquisite anguish of beholding you, also, that I may put into your hands the only memento I possess of one whose memory I dare to cherish?

I fear, Madame, you are not my friend. But I am

Yours,
Edouard Verdier
(*Marquis de Guimauve*).

Carène read again this unexpected communication penned in a very old and shakily gay handwriting.

Colour came and went in her face. She sat quite still on the divan. Edouard Verdier was no other than the *marquis* who in the long ago had been the lover of her great-great aunt, *la petite duchesse!*—he was no other than the titled playfellow of the shady idyl in Naples!

"Who is your note from, dear?" asked Pompey.

Her lashes remained on her cheeks. Quivers of colour vivified her face.

"From a poor dear who shouldn't be a friend of mine—but is," she murmured.

Pompey was surprised. "Are any of our friends in Naples, Carène?"

She was contemplative, still looking down.

"The dear is but two fingers from death, Pomp, and wishes to see me."

She read from the note, in her charming voice, "'—that I may have the exquisite anguish of beholding you—'"

Her lashes lifted, disclosing sparkling eyes.

"Isn't that nicely phrased?"

"Why 'exquisite anguish'?" smiled Pompey.

"Isn't it always anguish for the very

old to behold the very young?" she reproached.

"It may be," he admitted, smile ebbing — Pompey was some years older than his lovely French wife.

Carène rose impulsively, and, in her captivating way, laid her cheek for a second on his hand. Then she put the note back into its envelope.

"I cannot refuse so nicely turned a request," she declared, and glanced at the clock.

"Shall you go this evening?" inquired Pompey, comfortable in his chair by the reading-lamp.

"Of course. The poor dear!"

She tucked the crested envelope into her girdle — and crossed the room to ring for Witherspoon.

"What a bother!" commented Pompey, putting his book aside.

Carène went toward her bedroom.

"Yes, isn't it?" she agreed. "But you shan't be bothered with the dull old darling—I'll take Witherspoon with me, the villa is not far."

She switched on the lights at her mirror.

"Send Witherspoon with an excuse," suggested Pompey; "tell your old lady friend we're leaving to-morrow, and you're packing to-night."

"Fie on you, Pomp!" — Carène opened her jewel-case—"bidding me lie to one who may soon be able to inform *le bon Dieu* of the fib!"

She selected *fleur-de-lis* earrings and a tall coiffeur-comb that had once been worn by the Duchesse de Brazac. Going to her clothes-closet, she contemplated the gowns there.

"Which of my frocks produces exquisite anguish in your breast, Pomp?"

"Your most expensive one, dear," he laughed.

Witherspoon came in answer to the ring.

"I'm going on an errand of mercy, Wither," said Carène, "and you are going with me. I'll wear my old-gold brocade."

"Yes, Mrs. Gilfoil," replied Witherspoon, moving to the closet and taking the desired frock from its padded hanger. The old-gold brocade was sleeveless, with square neck and looped train, and a band of seed-pearls running from the left shoulder to the hem.

Carène had her hair dressed in a golden swirl and topknot—the tall coiffeur-comb and old-fashioned earrings added a touch of piquancy to her youthful face. The wrap she selected was sky-blue chiffon beaded with seed-pearls. In adventurous spirits, she returned to the drawing-room of the suite —Witherspoon following.

"*Au revoir, mon bibliophile,*" she said, stopping to pat the volume of romance in Pompey's hands.

"By crickets," said Pompey, "this seems a cheerless way for you to spend your final evening in Naples, Carène!" His handsome face puckered sympathetically.

Carène smoothed away the puckers with her fingers. "But then, you know, most of our evenings here have been cheerless, *mon cher*—and final evenings anywhere are apt to drive one wild."

She put her arms into the wrap that Witherspoon held for her.

With a volatile treading of her costly high heels, she left the suite, accompanied by her maid.

II

FROM the wide spaces of the Chiaia, the starlight seemed to slope sharply down to the brilliant bay. The straggling old city of steeps and tortuous thoroughfares, of stair-canyons and storied heights, was glamorous in the deep blue of the night.

They reached the Villa Ricordo.

Carène said, civilly, to her maid:

"Wither, you may find yourself a romantic step to sit on while I make my call. Look at the stars, and thank them that your visage saved you from having a lover."

"Where shall I find the step, Mrs. Gilfoil?" asked Witherspoon, woodenly.

"Follow your nose, *folle*. It cannot lead you to a misstep!" Carène snapped her fingers. "You may wait for me here, Wither, if it pleases you to stand

like a blockhead under the stars," she added with a laugh.

She turned her back on her maid.

Carène looked up at the marble pile where the Marquis de Guimauve—once the playfellow of the little *duchesse*—had been living for a number of years. Colour again tumbled into her face. Her delicately audacious nostrils quivered. Her hands flew together, with a gesture of expectancy.

Since the day when she had first heard the sorry tale of Antoinette de Brazac from the tongue of a garrulous *bonne* certain sorry tendencies in her own nature had condoned and defended the wayward one who had put the blot on the family escutcheon. The same bonne had taught her to lisp, "*Le vice est odieux—la vertu est belle.*" And under her baby breath she had stubbornly whispered, "*Ma tante est belle!*"

To-night she was poised before a Neapolitan villa that housed the old *marquis!*

She was to meet the gay and witty playfellow of Antoinette!

She could almost fancy herself Antoinette, loitering under the love-stars at the palpitant threshold. She even thought of the betrayed *duc* erasing a frail young image from his mind. Under the stars, at the entrance of the villa, she was imbued with the spirit of her little great-great aunt—so long dead that she might be part of the star-dust!

Feeling so like Antoinette, she wondered by what simple way she might cross the threshold of the villa. She could not, as a ghost of Edouard Verdier's youth, ring his bell, and send him her name by a servant!

She ascended the steps of a low balcony, and entered the villa by a window open to the starlight.

Ciel! she was within his house! She flung her train over her arm and crept forward, through big, dark rooms. Soon she came to a lighted portion of the villa. Her hands flew to her heart. She heard a feeble old voice behind the drawn, plum-coloured curtains of an archway:

"*Fermez la fenêtre, j'ai froid.*" It was only a whimper.

She heard the footsteps of his *valet de chambre*, and the closing of a window.

"*N'y a-t-il pas de lait chaud?*" quavered the aged voice.

The footsteps of the valet sounded again, and were lost in the distance.

Carène slipped through the hangings of the archway.

The room was lighted by candelabra of wax tapers—they shed a glimmer not unlike starlight over a bag of bones huddled in a huge plum-coloured chair.

The old *marquis* felt the draft on his hairless head.

"*Zut!*" he cried.

He turned his head, and saw her.

"Toinette!" he faltered—staring.

He gathered his wits with difficulty—he was very, very old.

"*Depuis quand etes-vous ici?—comment vous appelez-vous?*" he managed to say.

She approached his chair, holding out her hand. "*Je m'appelle Carène.*"

"Ah!" said the old *marquis*, taking her hand. "I know you now. You are her great-great niece, and the image of her."

His scant, arrogant eyebrows lifted, in lieu of a bow. "Forgive me that I do not rise, Madame. I cannot, for I am quite tottery."

"Pray do not think of rising, Marquis," she begged.

She seated herself in one of the gigantic chairs—the fleur-de-lis earrings glinted in the candlelight and the soft illumination struck rainbows from the tall coiffeur-comb.

"I received your note this evening, and have come to see you," she told him in her slight young voice.

The old *marquis* shook a trembling finger, on which a ring hung loose.

"Ta! ta! where is your good husband?" he said reprovingly. "So beautiful a young creature should not be unchaperoned *à la nuit tombante.*"

She traced nothings on her train with the toe of her delicate slipper. Her retort was light.

"A good husband absent is a better chaperon than a bad one present."

His ringed finger wavered to his chin, and, though he propped his chin in his palm, he could not steady it. Regarding her, his thoughts were *distrait* again.

"Except for your blonde hair, you are Toinette, in all the glory of her youth," he cried. His nose and chin met in a smile that gave his features a gleam of gaiety. "What would you think, my dear, if I said to you, 'This is rash, rash Toinette. What of the *duc, mon enfant charmante?*"

He could not control the trembling of his chin though he fairly held to it with his long, white fingers.

Carène lifted humid eyes. She said, impetuously:

"Tell me of Antoinette de Brazac—tell of Toinette. All my life I have wished to hear her true story, to know the truth about her— Was the *duc* a bad husband, whose presence outraged her? Or was he a good husband and the fault hers? In going away with you, Marquis, did she attain any happiness? What was the true version of her folly, and her end?"

The words were eager, and her young hands seemed on the point of shaking the story of *la petite duchesse* from this shadow of a gay *viveur*.

"*Tout beau*—softly, not so fast," he expostulated, holding to his chin. "*Je suis vieillard. Je perds la tramontane.*"

She was quick with a contrite gesture. "I am always so thoughtless. My *bonne* used to warn me that I would crush a Sèvres vase in my path if I happened to crave a soap-bubble on the other side of the vase."

She traced vague bubbles with her forefinger on the arm of her chair.

The words and action put a twinkle into his sunken blue eyes. He followed the foolish tracings of her forefinger. His well-modelled head, nude but for a fringe of finespun white hair, was inclined to nod.

"How often have I seen Toinette draw nothings with her finger, in that abashed young fashion!" he chuckled. "I trust, my child, that there is no sinner like myself in your life. I hope you have a good husband."

"I am the worst sinner I know," laughed Carène. "And my husband is a paragon."

He was alarmed. "Not a bore, my dear?"

"No." She was reflective. "My husband is handsome, attentive, and not devoid of humour."

"And his age?" asked the old *marquis*.

She swerved the trend of the conversation by bending forward to softly touch his hand.

"Let us talk of Antoinette," she said brightly. "You have a memento of her. Show it to me."

"*Mais oui*," he responded—and opened the drawer of a card-table beside his chair.

While his long hand rummaged through a jumble of cards, chips and dice, he said, half to himself:

"I would not part with it were I not dying. *Zut!* I would not have it thrown out to some ash-heap."

He found a sandalwood fan in the drawer, and spread it open on his knee.

He fondled the fan. His highly bred nose and chin met again in the smile that showed he had been quite magnetic.

"Her own fan!" he crooned. "Here, on the sticks, see, her own handwriting!—six of her *amourettes*, tabulated in violet ink by her fair fingers—until we come to the seventh stick, which tells of her love for me, then six blank sticks—"

Lacklustrous, he stared at the frail memento.

Carène rose to examine the fan.

Standing beside his chair, she scanned the lightly phrased violet follies—the seventh stick was inscribed with the faded words, "*Je t'aime.*"

She looked down, wonderingly, at the bag of bones in the great chair.

The valet entered with a goblet of warm milk for the old marquis.

"Ta! ta!" cried the marquis, rousing to wave the mild goblet away. "What a sacrilege! to talk of Toinette while

sipping the essence of the cow! *N'y a-t-il pas de vin*, Marc?"

He found his gold-headed stick by the chair, and shooed the valet off. Putting the point of his stick on the floor, he added, with a tinge of vivacity, to Carène:

"Come my dear, we will go out to the south terrace and drink our wine. There, we can see the stars she loved, and the bay."

With the aid of his stick, he got to his feet—and was seized by a fit of sneezing and coughing!

How very old he was! The cough threatened to shake him to pieces, and when he sneezed it seemed as if he might never do so again!

Carène seized a medicine-glass on the table, and put it to his lips.

"*Mon Dieu!*" she exclaimed.

She held him up until he recovered his breath.

His nose and chin met in a smile, and he held up two of his fingers.

"I am only that far from death, my dear," he wheezed. "If you will hand me my cloak, and lend me your arm, we will set off for the south terrace."

She put his cloak about him and slipped her arm through his—half of his incredibly light weight fell on the curve of her elbow. The gold-headed stick had the other half of him. She and the stick escorted the old marquis in safety to the south terrace of his villa.

III

One could not ask more of the world than the view of the stars and the bay from the south terrace. Myriads of close and far stars, and the bay sweeping out to the open sea. Carène and the old marquis were silent for a time, looking at the blue night that had been beloved by one whose memory they dared to cherish.

The valet brought wine.

They drank a toast to Antoinette.

Edouard Verdier, Marquis de Guimauve, trespasser, dying sinner, tipped his polished wine-glass, and talked of the naughty Neapolitan episode of his youth.

"Ah," he mused—buoyed by the wine—"those months were incomparable—such sunlight! clouds of chased silver against sapphire heavens, gentle winds that tipped the waves with white—I even remember the multitudinous fleas as a delight!"

He put his chin on his stick and peered down at the bay older even than himself.

"You know, my dear, ours was not the ordinary love-affair. We did not come to Naples to sit on terraces like this and drink rare wine. It was Toinette's choice to love in a simpler way, here by the sea. My dear, we were odd, eccentric—quite mad, the gossips had us. We made our habitation a fishing-hut, down there somewhere."

He pointed vaguely with his stick.

"We dressed like the fisher-folk, lived like them, selling our hauls for a living.

"What a Naples we knew! On the *Fête-Dieu* we were among the humble-folk enjoying the music in the Villa Reale, enchanted by the grottos and little groves, the recesses and fountains, the shrubs and statues—by no chance were we in the carriages on the Chiaia. Ah, they were months! We were playmates in the game of love, told with a new twist. We cooked our own macaroni, my dear. When we had pence to spare we mixed, hand-in-hand, with the merry populace and spent our earnings on some Punch and Judy show. They were months! They were months! And she was a love-playmate!"

He put his chin on his stick again, tenderly chortling.

Carène touched his stick. "What happened then? Why did you not go on playing together?"

"It was only a game, my dear. It could not last."

"Why? You loved each other."

"*A la vérité.* So one day we quarrelled and parted."

"What was your quarrel, playing so happily together?"

"I—have forgotten. *Je perds la tra-*

montane. I think—it was about a real fisher-lass, my dear."

He rapped his stick on the marble slab of the terrace-seat. "I tell you, I was a good-for-nothing! When I heard that Toinette had returned to Paris and thrown herself into the Seine I felt little regret—"

"*Hélas*, she could not return to the *duc!*" reflected Carène, who held the sandal-wood fan in her hands.

He rapped his stick again on the marble slab, continuing:

"I even felt half relieved that her beautiful eyes could not reproach me any more. '*Il faut s'amuser*' was my motto. It was not until I was old that I really loved Toinette. After wandering from one place to another, from novelty to novelty, from pleasure to pleasure, I came back to Naples, the spot most sentimental in my memory. I shall die here very soon, very soon."

His head nodded, and his chin sank into the withered hollow of his throat.

Carène spread out the sandal-wood fan. The fragrance of the East Indian wood assailed her nostrils. She thoughtfully studied the love-memento of thirteen sticks inscribed with six *peccadilles* and a seventh *péché*.

"You see, my dear," said the old marquis, after a while, "what a sorry thing a woman does to play with a mate like me."

"I see," said Carène, eyes downcast.

"The trouble is, my dear—a woman is apt to love a playmate overlong."

"One can never love a good husband overlong, Marquis."

"Never, my dear."

There were tears in her eyes. "*La pauvre petite tante!*"

"*La pauvre petite.*"

Looking at her wet blue eyes in the starlight, his wits went wandering back, over the years—again the meeting of his nose and chin showed what charm his smile had once possessed.

"Do not cry, image of Toinette," tenderly. Between her face in the starlight and the thimbleful of wine in his head, he grew quite befuddled—the poor old marquis.

"*Je te chanterai, bien-aimé,*" he cried. As if his stick were a guitar, he strummed on it. He crooned a love-strain, in Neapolitan dialect:

"'*Ma n' atu sole*
cchiu bbello, oi ne',
o' sole mio—'"

Suddenly he was leaning forward, as though she receded before his vision. "*Je crains d'être malade, portrait de Toinette!*" He held up a finger. "I am but this far from death, my dear. The old may ask favours of the young, may they not?—favour me by not pirouetting into the dark, before my eyes."

Carène humoured him, sitting beside him on the terrace-slab.

"The young are apt to pirouette in the starlight, Marquis," she laughed, and touched his stick to steady his vision.

"Ah," he said, more easily, "I see you now! Thank you."

For a minute or two he appeared to dream that the face beside him was in reality Toinette's.

"I am glad you have come, I have wanted so to see you, *petite*."

"You told me to come," said Carène, carrying on his fancy.

"So I did."

Dreaming of the past, he trembled. He said guiltily:

"I did not mean to be so sweet a child's destruction! — *bien-aimé*, I did not mean to send you to the Seine!"

He held to his chin, and sought to banish the dream by saying:

"Ta! ta! I am talking nonsense. Turn your starry eyes away, my dear."

But he shivered in his cloak and his flawless false teeth began to chatter—to the complete undoing of his chin.

"You are chilled, you are not so well!" Carène was alarmed for him. "Shall we go within?"

She rose, offering him her hand.

She timed her footsteps to his almost imperceptible progress from the terrace to the plum-coloured room.

He clung to her hand after he was in his great chair. He confided to her:

"Every night in the year I am haunted by the hope that Toinette might come to me, and the fear that she might! I have had little relief from her beautiful eyes. They have always followed me."

Carène sat on the arm of his chair, hand in his.

"They are love's eyes," she reminded him. "You should not fear them."

"But they are drowned eyes, my dear!"

"Not the Seine, nor any river, was deep enough to drown her love."

"It drowned her young body!"

"And freed her soul to love you for ever, Marquis."

"*Zut!*" he said pettishly. "Souls—I do not believe in souls! If I did, I'd believe in my own damnation."

His arrogant eyebrows lifted. He looked at her hand, and lost his arrogance.

"I did not mean to make her drown herself!" he cried out, as if in torment. "Six of her frailties were merely little skips of youth. I did not mean to make her write 'I love thee' on the seventh stick of her fan. It was mad of her to die because of me! Death comes to us soon enough. She was young to die, young!"

"But, think," said Carène, consoling him, "if she had lived she would have grown old, and no woman likes to do that. Those who die young are never wrinkled or unbeautiful. The world has hardly soiled them."

"The world," mumbled the old marquis, "is a mangle that yellows all our linen." He grew suddenly querulous. "Where is Marc?" bewildered—warming his hand with hers. "I am cold and tired, my dear. I want my night-cap of milk."

She drew his cloak about him. "I will ring for Marc—where shall I find the call-bell?"

He grew petulant.

"Find it yourself, my dear," he snapped at her.

She found the bell, and rang for his valet.

The old marquis huddled chillily in his chair. He missed her hand.

"Where are you?" he said crossly. His voice thinned. "We're not playing a game of hide-and-seek, are we?"

He found her with his eyes, and half whispered, "What sort of game are we playing? Do you know, my dear? I don't."

He watched the candlelight twinkle on her tall coiffeur-comb, and swirl of blonde hair.

"It is droll,"—he moistened his lips —"but I wish from my soul, you were Toinette. I wish you had her hair."

He propped a finger under his chin, and looked woefully witless. "I trust, *ma petite amie*, you are not a charming *diablesse* come to escort me on my journey across the Styx—you are, perhaps, the embodiment of my sins, *n'est-ce-pas?*" His nose and chin met in a ghastly, gay smile.

He was afraid this might be true. He trembled quite violently. "*Je perds la tramontane—comment vous appelez-vous?*"

He peered at her as if the room were growing dark.

"Who are you?" His face went ashen grey.

Carène felt so sorry for him that she fibbed to him.

"I am Toinette," she cried. "Do not be afraid, Marquis. I will take you up to God, and tell Him all about you. It is true that you have lived a wicked life. But God is good. We shall yet play together in Paradise."

She took the old marquis by the hand and kissed him.

The kiss made him lose all his terrors.

"*Je t'aime*," he said, quite innocently. "*Ta! ta! je n'ai pas peur de la mort.*"

He closed his eyes, his hand slipping from hers.

She heard his valet coming. When the footsteps were at the threshold she picked up the memento that the old marquis had given her and passed between the plum-coloured hangings, through the dark rooms, to the window opening on the starlight.

IV

WITHERSPOON was waiting for her at the entrance of the villa.

"The poor dear is dying, Wither," said Carène, gravely.

Under the brilliant stars, she returned to her hotel.

She entered the suite with a soundless treading of her costly heels. There was scant colour in her face. Her eyes were deep-blue.

She said, without breath to Pompey, "The poor dear is dying—*hélas!*"

Pompey had finished the romance of Pergolesus and was smoking a cigar over a batch of late mail.

"That's too bad," he replied, somewhat abstractedly. He added, "Here's a letter from Isabel—it's lucky you're ready to leave Naples, for she wants you to be matron-of-honour at little Isabel's wedding.

He handed her a very modern note-sheet from his sister, Isabel McKim.

Carène glanced at the fashionably slant chirography on the page and made a feint of reading the note as she walked to a window of the suite. She drew off her gloves and pressed her cold hands to her cheeks. Putting aside Isabel's note, she opened the sandal-wood fan and spread it on the window-sill—her forefinger traced the six *amourettes*, the seventh *mémoire*, and the blank sticks that followed the inscription, "*Je t'aime.*"

Beyond the window, the Bay of Naples plashed gaily in the night that seemed fashioned for picturesque follies and youthful adventuring. For love-games. For kisses slight enough to mean nothing, yet sweet enough to mean all, brief enough to be unsubstantial, yet deep enough to haunt the memory, young enough to enrapture the senses, yet old enough to enslave them.

Feeling that something was dying in her—and that the expiring little thing was folly—Carène closed the sandal-wood fan, stick by stick.

Half yawning, she wished herself old as the stars.

THE saddest thing in marriage is not a husband who tries to escape, but a husband who believes that he is happy.

ALL love affairs terminate in unpleasantness. They either end too soon or they end too late.

A WOMAN always remembers the men who kissed her, and never forgives those who failed to continue.

REMORSE

By June Gibson

SATAN was ill.

"What is the matter?" asked his wife.

"Remorse," said Satan. "A school teacher was sitting on a bench. I passed disguised as a matinee idol, tall, dark, handsome, and she gazed wistfully upon me. She closed her eyes and dreamed of love. She felt a kiss on her lips and opened her eyes. . . . I am filled with remorse."

"Don't grieve," said Mrs. Satan. "It probably was the top moment of her life."

"No; I am filled with remorse," groaned Satan. "I had unthinkingly changed my disguise. I was a cow."

DISCOVERY

By Maxwell Bodenheim

WITHIN your heart is a hidden pool
Stirred to foam-covered perfumes of motion
By naked shades of love.
Your loves bathe in this pool of subdued desires
And gently frolic 'neath a guardian-moon.
Then, you become aware of them
And with soft cries they run to their nuns' robes . . .
All this I know because
You smiled uncertainly, and then
Returned to your frail sternness.

MERE money will not buy happiness. It takes a whole lot of money.

WINGS IN THE MESH*

A COLLOQUY IN ONE ACT

By Milnes Levick

IT is the living room of a small suburban home, almost paid for. The living room is distinguished from its parent, the parlour, by Mission furniture and a different fashion in accessibility to fresh air: the type is, indeed, a superior triumph of machinery. In this example one may search the furniture, the hangings, the adornments, for a touch of intimacy and find no more than an occasional misplacement by accident or slovenliness. The hornless phonograph holds its station, the chairs stand sentry, the table is a citadel. From immutable positions on the top shelf of a built-in rack two rigid sets and a dozen old novels stare self-consciously through small ornate panes. Below, in tattered envelopes, are the phonograph records, banalities indiscriminately of vaudeville and of the opera. There are pictures, some printed trivialities, a large engraving in the manner of an etching, with anecdotal remarque, circa 1895; a slaty oil painting, work of a deceased aunt; a framed line of photographs, like a row of teeth, showing two children in obvious and slightly varied poses.

The room is of a piece with the bungalow, with the street, with the suburb. Beyond the lace curtains are other houses, precise and patterned, as impersonal as cheap motor cars—rows reaching out for miles.

Upon the table is a woman's hat, now cocked defiantly upon the edge of a handbag. Two long pins are stuck in it at reckless angles; their glass tips glare wall-eyed at the stolid lamp; they thrust themselves forward with wary belligerence like antennæ.

By the table is a strait, in which a big chair makes an island, now inhabited by Mrs. Meddock in a dingy house gown. Upon the other side of the room, purposely distant as if to emphasize the atmosphere of tenseness, is her elder daughter, Sophie Stark. The younger, Ruth Henshaw, in street dress like her sister, but hatless, slumps on a settee and the drapery of the phonograph box brushes her hair.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Ruth, you're not going to do this? I won't allow it.

SOPHIE:

Why, you're just playing into his hands. Can't you see. . . .

RUTH:

(*After a pause.*) See what?

SOPHIE:

That you're just making a fool of yourself to please him.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

You won't throw away your rights like this?

RUTH:

Rights? If it's over it's over, isn't it?

* Copyright, 1919, by the author.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Over! Well, of all—

SOPHIE:

How can you talk so?

RUTH:

Oh, I know: what God joins together. Well, I guess He didn't do the joining himself in our case.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

You shan't talk so before me, Ruth, whether you think it's smart or not. My dear, don't you suppose I can see how you feel at heart? Do you think to fool your mother? My poor child—

RUTH:

Not now, mother, please. You don't understand.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

But you speak as if it were a joke.

RUTH:

It's harder than you have any idea.

SOPHIE:

A mighty poor joke.

RUTH:

Easy enough for you to talk, Sophie. Your husband—

SOPHIE:

But if you do this he'll only just go on the same way, over and over; it's this woman now; then it will be someone else, and so on, and where will it end?

RUTH:

Maybe; what of it?

THE OTHER TWO:

What of it!

MRS. MEDDOCK:

That's in very poor taste, Ruth.

RUTH:

I'm not thinking about good taste. I'm thinking of life.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

When you've lived as long —

SOPHIE:

Does life mean that a man can go on getting rid of one wife after another as he pleases?

RUTH:

Sometimes, in some places.

SOPHIE:

But if it's like that, we might as well—

MRS. MEDDOCK:

What's religion for, and civilization?

RUTH:

Oh, come; I didn't say Martin would.

SOPHIE:

I'd like to give him a piece of my mind!

RUTH:

Don't you suppose he knows it?

SOPHIE:

Then if he has got some remnant of conscience why don't you—

RUTH:

Not conscience—not your kind of conscience. "Ruth," he said, "I ask you to follow your own mind no matter where it may lead, and if those"—what was it? Oh, "morality mongers"; yes. He said, "If those morality mongers start up like sausage grinders—"

MRS. MEDDOCK:

There is no need to repeat it. I've always known his dislike of us.

SOPHIE:

I'm glad he feels that way.

RUTH:

He called you termagants, too.

(*She smiles provocatively. Mrs. Meddock straightens, setting her mouth; Sophie assumes the air of one whose adversary's perfidy has been revealed.*)

RUTH:

And he said I must know he had loved me because he'd let me bring him to the family reunions every Christmas.

SOPHIE:

I see nothing for you to laugh at, Ruth.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

(*Whimpering.*) Indeed, *I'm* not laughing—

RUTH:

Do you think I am?

(*She jumps up; her fingers pick at the thumb of each hand.*)

SOPHIE:

Then why do you give in?

RUTH:

Give in! What good to go on making believe, with nothing but unhappiness? The truth can be beautiful, even if it is bitter.

SOPHIE:

You're crazy.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

But there's never been anything like that in the family. Oh, it seems as if everything was coming to pieces. There's nothing right anywhere. Think of what people will say.

RUTH:

It would have frightened me, before. But all that seems so foolish; all these people who talk—they're just like a nest of scurrying ants to me now.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

But, my dear! One can't set aside the whole world like that. And you'll find it so.

RUTH:

The world comes after you sharp enough. It's always talking about the divorce evil, and it knows that the trouble's really the marriage evil.

SOPHIE:

One can brazen out a disgrace like—

RUTH:

Disgrace, Sophie?

SOPHIE:

What do you call it, then? Divorce, another woman, you can't tell how much more!

RUTH:

It's not disgrace to me, but just trying to keep life honest.

SOPHIE:

I'd call it that.

RUTH:

And I'd call *your* kind of life disgrace.

SOPHIE:

Well!

RUTH:

Oh, don't pretend. You know what I mean. You laughed at me years ago when I said it was immoral for a man and woman to live together if they weren't in love. I think so yet.

SOPHIE:

It's lucky for the world it doesn't agree with you. . . . Besides, Herbert and I love each other very dearly.

RUTH:

Oh, yes. I know: why, you've been together so long you're even beginning to look alike, but is that what love means to you?

SOPHIE:

Maybe you know better than I do what it really is.

RUTH:

Sneer if you want to, but I do and that's why—

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Ruth, don't aggravate your sister.

SOPHIE:

She's not. But there are some things—

RUTH:

Love! My God, what do *you* know of love?

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Don't talk so. I won't have it. Is blasphemy a part of what you're doing?

RUTH:

Oh, your religion doesn't bother me any more—

MRS. MEDDOCK:

We're not church people, it's true, but at least we're ready to acknowledge that it wouldn't do us any harm to go now and then.

RUTH:

Not any harm. It just wouldn't touch you.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Well, things have changed a good deal since I was young.

SOPHIE:

Not so much, mother.

RUTH:

More than you can ever imagine. Half the world's freed.

SOPHIE:

There are rights and duties that go back thousands of years—

RUTH:

To the cave dwellers. We *are* advancing, aren't we?

SOPHIE:

You married so young, and all his ideas—

RUTH:

You can say what you like about him, but he's got more—

SOPHIE:

What's the use of talking this way? Make a fool of yourself. Go ahead. But I do wish you'd pick out some way that wouldn't blacken our name.

RUTH:

The name's all you think of. Did you ever look any further?

SOPHIE:

I hate him.

RUTH:

You're afraid of him.

SOPHIE:

Pooh!

(*There is a hiatus. Presently Sophie renews the attack.*)

SOPHIE:

I don't think you realize what this means. Everyone's disappointed, Ruth, to some extent. One marries for better or for worse. . . . None of us is perfect. I daresay it's hard for Herbert to put up with me sometimes. And he isn't always what I'd like. But we're not rushing off to the divorce court. People don't do that. We have to take things as they are.

RUTH:

But you won't face them. I'm taking life as it comes to me. What's the use of lying when everyone knows you are and doesn't care, except for the amusement of it, because they're too busy lying themselves.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

(*Righteously.*) Some people—why, your father and I——

RUTH:

You cried all through the first year you were married. Every day for a whole year. (*Mrs. Meddock stiffens and makes a gesture of reproach.*) I know it. Sophie knows it. Children hear such things when they grow up. At our age parents are human beings. You cried because you were disappointed. Then you stopped. He hadn't changed: you had. You'd started to make a truth out of your lie. You've only made a lie out of your truth.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

(*Wounded, but with a tremor of gratitude for this tardy comprehension; she turns to the elder girl protestingly.*) Sophie? . . .

(*Sophie says nothing; she looks steadily but with constraint at her sister. At seeing her mother forced thus to pay she feels faintly a repressed and jealous cruelty, whose recognition would pain and shock her.*)

RUTH:

I can't make the facts over; I won't risk what's left by pretending. That's why I'm going to a lawyer to-morrow.

SOPHIE:

Martin's acting shamefully.

RUTH:

His love for—for her, is real. It's as honest as his love for me was. It's bound to be recognized. What's the good of trying to shut it up in a cupboard. I only wish I could. God! I wish I could.

SOPHIE:

But you're letting your whole life be—

RUTH:

It's got to be made over, Sophie: I could lie, but you can't change life any more than you can make the sun set by closing your eyes.

SOPHIE:

You must make your own life.

RUTH:

Have you made yours, or mother hers? "Take the world as you find it," you say, and "make your own life." Which—

SOPHIE:

Make the most of your chances at any rate.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

You can force Martin—

RUTH:

Blackmail him. Thank Heaven—

MRS. MEDDOCK:

But how will you live? Your father's getting old; he can't—

RUTH:

He won't have to, mother. But I won't try to compel Martin. There's no need to. Perhaps. . . . No, I don't want any help. I can earn my own living.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Yes, you'll have to

SOPHIE:

What at?

RUTH:

Other women do it.

SOPHIE:

But you could make him pay. What are laws for?

RUTH:

They're weapons. I love him. He may not love me as he used to, but—(*she puts her handkerchief to her mouth.*)

MRS. MEDDOCK:

(*Rising, comforts her in silence a moment.*) I must go to the kitchen. Your father—

(*For a space the sisters, alone, do not speak.*)

RUTH:

It will be hard, going to court. The thought of it makes me feel like a shipwrecked sailor in a court of savages.

SOPHIE:

Ruth, you're a fool. I would no more let Herbert—

RUTH:

You knew what you were getting when you married him. You could see the years straight ahead, with never anything around the corner. It used to make me sad to see that you could. And there has never been any corner for you.

SOPHIE:

Is that what you really think? . . . (*Their gaze joins for five seconds.*)

RUTH:

Sophie, not you, too?

SOPHIE:

No, Ruth; I won't permit it. And he knows it.

RUTH:

But it doesn't seem worth while. Love is a giving. If one must fight—

SOPHIE:

You're still a romantic girl. Haven't you found out married life isn't love?

RUTH:

Then I want no married life! I can't say it now: it never seemed to make any real difference if we were married or not.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Ruth, do you defend this libertine even now, against your own mother?

RUTH:

If you knew how I want your understanding! Not sympathy, that you'd give a hurt dog, but just a word to make me feel that I wasn't standing all alone in my world.

SOPHIE:

I said from the beginning he had an evil effect on you.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Maybe this is just a lark of his, Ruth. Men go on so sometimes. Maybe he'll come back and you can go on just as if nothing had happened.

RUTH:

As if nothing had happened. . . .

SOPHIE:

If it's possible? Why not wait?

RUTH:

Don't you suppose we have waited till there's no use waiting any longer?

MRS. MEDDOCK:

But how can a man know? You're such a child—

RUTH:

He knows. I know.

SOPHIE:

You're full of illusions.

RUTH:

No illusions. They've all melted.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Maybe when he's had his fling—

RUTH:

I can take what's left?

MRS. MEDDOCK:

A wife should know how to forgive.

RUTH:

Forgive the rain for falling.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

I've seen much more than—

RUTH:

You haven't seen anything, mother. You don't want to. You take little pieces of fact and try to fit them like pieces of a puzzle instead of simply taking them for what they are. You think he's wrong because he didn't lie; you tell me I'm weak, when I'm using every bit of strength I can gather to see it all through without any pretending. It's so much easier to make believe.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Sometimes one has to compromise with life.

RUTH:

You mean let life cheat you.

SOPHIE:

What's all this talk of not pretending? You seem as anxious as he is.

RUTH:

When I came here to-day I didn't know what I'd say, how I'd explain. I was still numb from it all. But you've made it clear. There's only this way.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

If you didn't sue, what would he—

RUTH:

Oh, that doesn't matter. I suppose I've given him cause enough, if he wants to. Cruelty's so—

MRS. MEDDOCK:

But surely—

RUTH:

Which side gets the decree is just a matter of courtesy.

SOPHIE:

Well, I'm glad you're going to make them pay, anyway.

RUTH:

I didn't say that.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Not? Why not?

SOPHIE:

Why, you just said—

RUTH:

I don't want any spite work. What have I to do with her?

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Hasn't she—?

RUTH:

She thinks she's right.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Ruth, it's your duty; you may save some other wife by making an example—

RUTH:

By frightening some man into cheap little lies, because he hasn't the courage to think it out for himself. I'd feel as if all his sneaking lies were my own sins. They would be.

SOPHIE:

You'll find sentimental charity like that doesn't work in real life. (*Ruth denies the definition with a wave of the hand.*) This crazy notion—now, Ruth: seriously, aren't you going to do yourself simple justice and show them up? Oh, but you should make them suffer, too!

MRS. MEDDOCK:

They ought to be made to pay.

RUTH:

I'm going to do what I think's right.

SOPHIE:

The blame's his.

RUTH:

It's not a matter for blame.

SOPHIE:

There'll be talk, anyway; you might as well.

RUTH:

"If I don't somebody will." And you talk of pride, Sophie!

SOPHIE:

That doesn't shock me. Sometimes. . . . But see where it's brought you. How many couples are what you'd call happy?

RUTH:

Oh, I suppose there never was a man and wife who didn't have plenty of cause for divorce, on both sides.

SOPHIE:

Marriage is a woman's business. You must never let him forget for a moment (*Ruth shudders*) or the first passing fancy—

RUTH:

It's better to let him go than to be for ever parading—

SOPHIE:

Well, you're letting him go, without raising a finger.

RUTH:

We've not been happy. Things have changed so completely . . . so slowly, like the hands of a clock. There's so much to look back on, but the beautiful days that seem only yesterday—they were all so far back; three years, four, five. It seemed to me sometimes life had stopped, but it was always going to begin again. Now . . . Life is so funny. . . . I just hurt mother. She doesn't realize.

SOPHIE:

How do you mean, realize, Ruth? It seems to me quite plain, like black and white. If a man acts as he's acting, throwing you over, snapping his fingers at his duty— Oh! how can you stand it? You may have been to blame in letting him get out of hand, but why don't you assert yourself now? I'd like to horsewhip him.

RUTH:

He came to me, Sophie, and told me all about it, like a friend.

SOPHIE:

The cur!

RUTH:

But he said he wanted no dishonesty.

SOPHIE:

Bah! He might have spared you that much.

RUTH:

And lied to me?

SOPHIE:

Why didn't he go his way decently and quietly, instead of blurting it all out that way? Why couldn't he keep it to himself: he could have done as he pleased, and you'd never have known.

RUTH:

What good?

SOPHIE:

Wouldn't that have smoothed things over? Wouldn't it have let you keep up appearances, instead of having your home blown to pieces, your whole life—

RUTH:

Bother appearances!

SOPHIE:

Well, that's the way most of us have to live.

RUTH:

And you're jealous of those who won't.

SOPHIE:

If they don't conform, let them take the consequences.

RUTH:

Very well.

SOPHIE:

There, there. It's not you so much: you're just a poor little—

RUTH:

I'm frightened, I know. So would you be if you had an earthquake.

SOPHIE:

I know my rights. No earthquake of that kind could harm me.

RUTH:

No, you wouldn't let it.

SOPHIE:

It makes my blood boil to see a woman submit meekly to—

(*Mrs. Meddock returns from the kitchen.*)

MRS. MEDDOCK:

I'm sorry, Ruth, but your father will be here any minute, and you know what he is if he has to wait dinner. . . . Oh, (*Taking seat*) it doesn't seem as if it could be.

RUTH:

Let's not begin all over again. We've been going round and round.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

But we must talk this over thoroughly, Ruth. You mustn't do anything till—

RUTH:

I've looked at it from every side.

SOPHIE:

He went and told her all about it, right out!

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Oh!

SOPHIE:

I don't see how she stood it. There are some things women have to take and smile if they can. One can expect those. But for a man to come and say—

RUTH:

Would you prefer Herbert to go to you slyly, with lies too childish to offer or to accept without shame?

MRS. MEDDOCK:

You must learn—

SOPHIE:

One can shut one's eyes and still keep something—more than you've kept with all your fine talk.

RUTH:

You're not afraid of the thing; it's the name that frightens you. Your whole existence is built around names and not things. And now you sit here and pretend to be shocked, and lecture me and pose, and wish for horsewhips, because something too big for you has touched the edge of your life.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

You don't lack excuses, Ruth.

RUTH:

I don't want any.

SOPHIE:

Oh, you're not a woman! Haven't you a spark of revenge?

RUTH:

Maybe it's my better nature.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

How can you laugh?

RUTH:

Oh, it's not a funeral. . . . It's a birth. That's pain, but it needn't be made mean and dirty. And if it is pain, you can't escape it.

(*They sit a moment in irksome silence. Ruth rises.*)

RUTH:

I'm going.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

But your father—

RUTH:

I couldn't stand him now.

(*To Mrs. Meddock this is the ultimate of delinquency. Ruth puts on her hat with care: she is secretly exultant. Sophie, baffled, does not rise.*)

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Well, Ruth—

(*Suddenly Ruth, without a word, dashes to the door, slams it, and is gone. The two women listen with offended stolidity to the repercussion, then ruminate in a silence that speaks. Presently Mrs. Meddock stirs.*)

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Don't tell papa, Sophie . . . not before dinner.

SOPHIE:

No . . . Poor papa.

(*A man's precise and heavy footsteps are heard approaching on the sidewalk.*)

A CHANT

By Charles Glendon

GOD did not make me especially beautiful.
He did not make me especially witty.
He did not make me especially brave.
He did not make me especially rich.
He did not make me especially good.

In fact, He just made me.
But, thank God, He made me young.

E PLURIBUS UNUM

By Dennison Varr

HE was on the whole an ideal husband. Indeed, when she reviewed his personality with her critical insight she was conscious of a great many virtues and only one defect—and that defect was mitigated by the fact that it was more or less involuntary. He had delirium tremens regularly.

TO ONE IN FAVOUR

By Djuna Barnes

WHEN the throne stands empty, and the king goes down,
Down into the darkness by your high white tent,
And shall sheath his grey sword, lay aside his crown;
Then, O tall white woman, shall you be content?

Shall you be contented, lying on his knee,
Murmuring face downward, lips within his palm?
Then shall you remember, thus you once kissed me,
Only wilder, madder, closer in my arm?

When he shall release you, turn his eyes to sleep;
Will you lift a little, looking in his face,
And recall our parting, for a moment weep
Down upon his doublet, tarnishing the lace?

And when up the sun rides, and the daylight comes,
Loud with sudden sparrows, and their latest talk,
Will you take his face so, in your two long thumbs
Kiss his mouth for kindness, then rise up and walk?

THE LITTLE GRAND DUCHESS

By Solita Solano

SINCE the grand duchess was so tiny that she looked like a French doll in her white lace coats and fur-trimmed silk bonnets she had been taught to be fastidious. Her person, companions, books and food were all subjected to a sterilizing process that was as relentless as it was frequent. A great marriage was intended for her and she was never permitted to forget that, until this event, her life must be spent in preparation for her proud position.

Her mind was trained as gracefully —and as inadequately—as her body. For the science and economics she lacked there were the piano, embroidery, a little painting, languages, etiquette and charming manners — in fact, everything that would not tend to make her discontented in the coming rôle of pleasant companion during the first months of matrimony and, subsequently, a satisfactory producer of kinglets and princelings. Having no more native intelligence than usually accompanies royal blood, the little grand duchess concentrated amiably on a certain look she had been told was "spirituelle," an aloofness of bearing and—above all else—the integrity of her person.

She neither gave nor received kisses. She considered them vulgar—when she thought of them at all. Nor did she indulge in hand-claspings, embraces of any pre-adolescent emotions whatever. The common need for affection she claimed not to understand. And as she had been taught, so she prated, "My first kiss shall be for my husband"—a sentiment her mother and elder sisters applauded until she grew quite priggish on the subject.

When she was about thirteen years old and growing very beautiful, she became devoted to meditation and prayer before her especial ikon. She would gaze at the gently swaying flames of the candles on either side of the holy image and deplore the failings of humanity. Sometimes she even prostrated herself to pray for some erring servant whose love sin had reached her ears—for even the daughter of a great ruler may overhear a whispered scandal much in the same way as the curious child of the bourgeoisie.

Until she was past her sixteenth birthday the little grand duchess prayed more and more fervently, without, however, having any particular blessing in mind. And her innocent young soul would have been shocked and angered to its depths had the court physician told her the meaning of these religious ecstacies. And then she fell suddenly and helplessly in love.

Nature did not consult her about this nor allow her to select an eligible *parti* upon whom to bestow her first love. He was the son of her mother's second cousin, a nobody at court but a personable youth with merry blue eyes and wavy hair. He captured her fancy at first glance. Had the child experienced the usual youthful affairs of the heart she might not have taken the chills and fevers of love so seriously. But in her first suffering she felt convinced that Serge was sent her by heaven.

This trust led her to her mother. Serge, she explained, was the husband she desired, rather than that other uninteresting plan for her future of which

she had so often heard. She was willing to oblige her parents in all reasonable matters but in love—ah, in love one must choose for oneself. Surely her mother could understand and would explain it to her father. Then they could be married at once and go to live in the country.

The royal parents were more amused than alarmed. Yet precautions in such cases were never to be scorned. Thus Serge was brought to leave the palace that very day without making his farewells, lest in some unguarded moment he might touch the hand or lips of their unsullied treasure.

The little grand duchess wept unceasingly for many nights. Then pale and quiet she went about her life as before, more pious and more aloof than ever.

That year a great war was unleashed. At first it raged far away and then as the months passed it came nearer.

Discontent grew apace among the people. The father of the little grand duchess spent days and nights in conference with mysterious foreign envoys whose guttural pronunciation of French annoyed one's ears. The royal family withdrew from public sight as resentful subjects grew bolder and more unrestrained of speech. And thus they lived more and more fearfully as bad news arrived with increasing frequency.

Then like the bursting of a volcano, came a revolution. A blood-lusting mob pursued and slew all persons of wealth or power. The royal family fled to an unused castle where they waited in terror for whatever was to come. Luxurious comforts which formerly had been inseparable from their daily life now could not be provided by their dazed retainers. The fastidious little grand duchess, annoyed by dust and disorder, commanded that clean linen be brought to her apartment and draped over walls and furniture that no cobweb might touch her shining hair or fleck of dust stain skin or garment. She ordered hot water for her morning bath just as if the daily routine had not been interrupted and, despite the risk, a servant went back to the terrorized city to fetch cologne, lotions and fresh linen.

One night a great noise was heard outside the castle. A band of sweating men, half crazed by war and drink, broke down the gates and swarmed at the castle's doors. With rough torches held aloft in hands foul with dried blood and muck, they smelled out the royal family almost at once with a keen scent for such delicate game.

The little grand duchess was huddled with her parents and sisters when they forced the library door with harsh cries. She saw a knife flash over her father's head and heard her sisters scream as coarse arms seized them. Eluding a pair of thick hands, she fled down a corridor and gained her room. She barred the door and fell on her face, gasping and praying and trying not to hear the running feet outside and the shrieks of her sisters.

Heavy blows began to rain on the door. Voices demanded entrance. An iron bar presently smashed in the panels and an ape-like forearm pushed its way through the splintered wood and threw back the bolts. Its owner, powerful and without reverence, was the first to enter. His boots left smudges where he stepped. A dozen hulks of men followed him in. Their small, terrible eyes were half covered by the locks of hair that grew almost to their eyebrows.

With coarse jests they approached her, one by one—the fastidious little grand duchess whose finger tips were too sacred for the second cousin's son.

Her shining hair became roughened and wet with the sweat of her captors. That dainty skin which had never known a flaw showed ugly red splotches. Purple welts and bruises appeared on the slim young throat. Her screams died to moans which grew fainter and fainter.

Mercifully, she died before the end. Before dawn they carried the bodies of the little grand duchess and her sisters to a precipice's edge. Without compunction, they flung them, filthy and broken, into space.

THE INTERLUDE

By John C. Cavendish

I

THEY separated without words, without a quarrel, with no final meanness of speech or gesture to linger regretfully in their memories. Neither of them was surprised at the smooth gentility of their parting; they expected a civilized deportment from each other. Langhorne had too profound a sense of the futility of everything to be surprised at the inevitable, to be even regretful at the fully foreseen. And as for his wife, while she was surely not a woman influenced by any depth of philosophy, she always lived up to her rôle, which was one of complex artificiality.

Langhorne doubted that she had ever experienced a genuine emotion in her life, shed a heartfelt tear, smiled an authentic smile. He had come to regard her as a woman of intricate poses, a charming marionette with an extreme flexibility of attitude. She could, for example, enact excellently the pose of dignity, of tenderness, of graciousness, of silent scorn, even of pity—but she would never permit herself the part of a common woman, to bandy mean recrimination with him, to accuse him spitefully.

Just as he had expected, they agreed to part with the utmost amicability, with the understanding that they were tired of each other. And when she presented her lips for a final unfelt kiss, he had almost laughed aloud; it was so precisely the gesture she found in keeping with the moment! Now he was relieved; now he was free.

He had taken quarters in an hotel, but the city annoyed him and he felt the desire to be alone for a time, separated from all the faces with which he was familiar.

Oddly enough, his mind went back to a certain summer, many years before, when he was still a very young man and had spent six months with a friend in the mountains, living in an isolated little cabin, cooking his own meals, taking a deep pleasure in the solitude and the freedom of his environment. Recalling the adventure, other reminiscences connected with this period returned to him; he remembered himself, his attitude toward life, his hopes, his ideals, his dreams.

He smiled: his hopes, his dreams—they were so far behind him that they had not even the substance of phantoms, they were more vague than ghosts, and he felt sceptical and amused at their one-time existence. But the idea of going away again to just such a place appealed to him strongly.

He made up his mind he would find a little house somewhere and try the experiment of being alone.

For a time he was puzzled about the location. Then he recalled a friend who owned a thousand or more useless acres in the mountain region of Pennsylvania—the fellow used to shoot small game there occasionally.

He looked up this chap and told him what he wanted.

"Your idea is to be absolutely alone?" he was asked.

"Yes; I'm not going to take a soul with me."

"What's the matter—nerves? Too much business?"

"No, indeed. I'm a devil of a sight sounder than you are."

"Are you crazy then?"

"Perhaps. Sanity is only a convention. You follow certain lines of action, according to your station in life, and you're sane. There's a shack on the place, isn't there? Well then, tell me how to get there and I'll drive up with the back of my car full of provisions and camp till I get tired. Is that all right?"

His friend agreed, of course—Langhorne laughed when he parted from him. His vagary would furnish the topic for a great amount of futile speculation; these men assumed even less interesting and significant poses than his wife. He was glad he was going away. Perhaps he would be back in a week. Now that the affair was settled, he was not at all sure of himself.

It was still early in the spring and he anticipated some more cold weather. He provided himself with a couple of sweaters, leather boots, some thick gloves and an assortment of appropriate clothes.

He set out from the city at daylight one morning with the back of his car piled up with boxes and even the space beside him crowded with odds and ends. He was soon out in the country and, driving leisurely, he observed men in the fields beginning the spring ploughing. Their occupation interested him; it seemed pleasantly real. If it had not been for his disinclination to get dirty, or to work hard physically, he believed he would rather like this sort of thing for a while himself.

At noon he stopped in a small town and had lunch. Late in the afternoon, as it showed signs of an early dusk, he decided to stop at the next road-house and put up for the night. He was still half a day's drive from his destination.

He had been out only a short time the following morning when the aspect of the country took on a marked change. The night before he had found himself in the foothills of the mountains; now the ascents became steep; the roads of hard-packed shale stretched up in long inclines; the woods became more frequent and the little villages more widely separated.

The sky-line was now picturesque; blue, misted and sombre, with the distant ranges of the mountains like waves of heavy chromatic smoke, transfixed in their motionless undulations, and settled, like a sinister and suggestive pall, over the silent land. Nearer, the abrupt hills rose up like inaccessible sentinels of a more distant and impressive host, often bare, save for occasional pines, that topped them in a mournful and dignified isolation.

In these early morning hours the earth seemed wrapped in a primeval brooding, profoundly significant, profoundly inscrutable. Langhorne was pleased; he drove his car more rapidly, anxious to come to the end of his journey.

The last hour's driving was difficult. Some of the ascents were so steep that the water in his radiator boiled furiously and he had to stop at the top of the hills and let the engine cool. Toward noon he frequently consulted an improvised map, given him by his friend.

So far as he could tell, he was not more than an hour distant from the place he sought. He was fully in the mountains now; there were stretches of bare land, covered with a short growth of scrub oak that grew thickly and abundantly over the whole acres. Again, he passed silent miles of pine woods, very dark, curiously quiet, exhaling a suggestive fragrance. Now and then there was a house and cleared land, a forlorn worker trying to plough up a farm whose soil seemed an interminable perversity of rocks, large and small, with scarcely a handful of earth. Langhorne wondered at the dumb optimism of these people.

At last he located the approach to his own shack and verified it by questioning two lumbermen who were resting their horses at the bottom of a hill, a dozen pine logs piled on the trucks. They were seated on the top of a half of a lumber wagon, and as he talked to them they eyed him with a frank

curiosity. He went on another half mile and found the lane that led back to the house.

It was scarcely big enough for the passage of his car. The pines and hemlocks grew up on either side, shadowing the lane so that the road almost suggested a half-opened tunnel. It widened suddenly into a cleared space and he saw the frame house set up a few feet on an uneven terrace. A rabbit sat on the doorstep regarding him mildly, and it disappeared into the grass in long bounds as he alighted from his car. He could hear it in the brush for quite a time; the single sound of its flight accentuated the surrounding silence. In a few minutes he was inside the house.

He found several beds, a stove, a wood-pile in back, a fireplace and logs cut to burn, several easy chairs, a big table in what he determined to make his living room and three or four coal-oil lamps. He was entirely satisfied. He spent the remainder of the afternoon carrying his provisions from the car into the kitchen.

He went to bed very tired, but just before he fell into sleep he experienced a sudden wonder about his wife; what pose was she assuming now? No doubt the one of being gracious to some of the men she knew.

He smiled, and passed into unconsciousness with the smile on his lips.

II

After a day or two, when he had settled himself, he made some tentative explorations in the vicinity of the house.

The lane that led in from the road, crooked and narrow at best, stopped abruptly at the frame building which he occupied and beyond the clearing it had its continuation in a path covered with pine needles that dipped down a quarter of a mile into the valley, where a spring of very cold water came up among a series of broad, flat rocks. He discovered the spring on the first day of his exploration and thereafter he went down to it every morning to bring back his drinking water for the day.

Approaching the spring early one morning, the third or fourth day after his arrival, he heard voices in conversation. Evidently a man and a woman were at the spring, and before he made the turn of the path that revealed them, he experienced some surprise at their presence.

Now they came into his view; the man was kneeling on the rocks, dipping up the water in a shallow pail which he emptied into one of a pair of large buckets at his side. A girl was standing over him, talking. They did not notice Langhorne until he was almost upon them; his tread was silent in the needle-padded path.

The girl observed him first. She made an exclamation to her companion. He raised his head, still kneeling, and the two stared fixedly at Langhorne.

"Good-morning," he said.

For a moment neither of them replied. Then the girl spoke.

"Who are you?" she asked.

She did not smile at him; her tone was surly; her voice was harsh. She seemed to resent his appearance; she looked at him as if he were trespassing on forbidden ground.

"I'm living in the house up above," he said.

She stared a moment more.

"Oh . . ." she muttered, finally.

She dropped her eyes; her expression was sullen, almost angry.

Langhorne observed her with curiosity. Her appearance was unkempt and in a measure suggested wildness, like that of a half-tamed animal. The tawny strands of her hair were drawn tight against her head, swept down across her ears and up into a large knot at the back. Her eyes were large, light blue, and cold. Her lips were full, and, it seemed, habitually sullen. She stood with her feet wide apart, in a pose of exceptional vitality.

Now her companion stood up and faced Langhorne. On his feet, he

looked enormous; he towered above the girl like a giant. On his huge frame, his small, youthful face and his small head seemed placed there by a mistake in creation, a neglectful inadequacy. He spoke in a hesitating, diffident voice, and smiled naïvely, ingratiatingly.

"This is your spring, I guess," he said. "We come down here once in a while to get some decent water. You don't mind that, do you? The creek is so blamed muddy this time of year."

"No, I don't mind at all," answered Langhorne.

The fellow stooped down and began to bail more water out of the spring. Then the girl lifted her eyes and looked at Langhorne, staring without flinching, as if he were a phenomenon.

"How long have you been here?" she asked.

Her question was put with a naïve directness, and with a flavour of belligerency that he afterward came to associate with all her speech.

"Nearly a week now," he answered.

"You don't belong here. Why did you come?"

He smiled at her, lifting his eyebrows a little, hesitating before he spoke again.

"Let me ask you some questions," he said. "That's fair, isn't it?"

"What do you want to know?"

"Well, who are you?"

"My name is Alice." She pointed at the kneeling giant. "Do you want to know who he is?"

Langhorne nodded.

"He works for my father on his farm. If you walk through these woods for half a mile you'll come to it. His name is Bredin. He wants to marry me!"

The girl began to laugh, almost mirthlessly. Langhorne saw the youthful Gargantua put out one hand in a hesitating, restraining gesture, which the girl ignored. His downward-cast face reddened violently. He said nothing.

"He hasn't got nerve enough for me," the girl went on, her smile disappearing, an expression of profound scorn touching her features like the dropping upon them of a sinister mask.

"He's afraid of my old man," she added.

She looked down at the water buckets.

"Come on," she said, addressing the boy. "That's all we can carry."

The big fellow stood up, obedient and docile. He gathered up the pails and started off through the path. The girl followed him. She did not look back; she ignored Langhorne as if he had vanished from her thoughts, from her sight, from all necessity of taking leave of him.

He watched the curious pair until they disappeared in the woods. Then he filled his own pail.

The boy with the inadequate head did not interest him; he was thinking of the girl. She came to him with an unusual freshness, with the manner of something utterly new. All her speech, all her movements, her smallest gesture—the turn of her head, the shape of her lips in talking, the play of her figure under her cotton dress as she walked away—were essentially primitive and convincing. She had the genuineness of primeval simplicity. He could imagine for her all the elemental emotions exhibited with fervour and intensity. She was capable of savage hate, of mad love, of brutal scorn, of merciless animosities.

He turned away from the spring, thoughtfully, wondering. He hoped that he would soon see her again.

III

He came upon her about a week later, under startling circumstances.

He was walking through the woods, and he saw her sitting on a fallen log, panting like a spent animal, scowling and grimacing with the utmost ferocity at the tall trees that surrounded and were the silent and unconcerned recipients of her obvious rage.

Her brownish-yellow hair was loosened and fell about her face and shoulders in an astonishing profusion, in al-

most smothering masses. One of her cheeks was bright red, as if it had been painted with some livid dye. When she heard his footsteps she looked up suddenly, stared at him a second as if without recognition and then seemed to draw in a relieved breath. Evidently she had feared someone else.

"What do you want?" she exclaimed.

Langhorne approached her slowly. She did not rise from the log, but tilting her face, fastened her malignant eyes upon him.

Something in her stare thrilled him, touching his heart to a vague fear, to a profound interest, to the consciousness of a vital and unaccustomed experience.

For a few seconds he looked at her without speaking.

"What is the matter with you?" he asked, finally.

She glared at him with a primitive and deep ferocity, so manifestly genuine, that for a moment he had the confused sense of being himself the author of some fundamental hurt to her, some act of violence and force that aroused all her abundant hatred, all her profuse rage. She clenched the fingers of her strong hands brutally against her thighs.

"My old man is a devil!" she cried. "The old fool gets drunk, and then the Lord Almighty couldn't do anything with him. Some time when he tries to beat me, I'm going to kill him; don't think I haven't got the nerve; I'll knock him on the head with whatever I get my hands on!"

For a second she ceased speaking; she dropped her eyes and stared with sombre resolution at the silent earth.

"He was out all night," she went on. "He came in this morning and pulled me out of a chair by the hair. He knocked me down and tried to kick me. I rolled out of his reach and ran away from the house. He chased me over the fields."

She paused again, and pushed back the burdening mass of long hair from her face.

"The last I saw of my old man," she said, "he was lying in the mud of the cornfield, where he fell. Oh, I'll kill him sooner or later, you believe me!"

Her voice was hoarse, harsh, muttering; he did believe her. He believed her absolutely, with an entire faith in her revengeful and passionate purpose.

His conviction was so complete that her words impressed him profoundly; she had for him the aspect of an enraged animal; she crouched on the log like a tiger, ready at any instant with the stroke of a savage paw.

Again he felt her genuineness, her primitive sincerity. By some obscure impulse he was made to think of his wife, and the contrast of her gestures, her poses, her inconsequent postures, set off luminously the emotional directness of the girl before him.

The situation pleased him. He was aware, suddenly, that it was pleasant to come upon this sort of adventure in his life, to know that there were in the world these simple people, full of elemental rages, real hate, real brutality, real passion.

He thought of the savage fellow who must be her father—her "old man." He wanted to meet this savage, talk with him; he knew he would be as stimulating as his daughter. These people seemed in entire consonance with the brooding and sinister nature among which they had their being.

He stepped close to the girl and touched her shoulder.

"Your cheek is inflamed," he said. "He must have hit you there. If you want to walk up to the house with me, I'll give you something to wash it in that will take down the swelling."

For a little while she was motionless, silent, unregardful, staring at the earth as if she had not heard him. Then she stood up swiftly.

"All right," she said.

She quickly passed her hand under his arm.

"Your cheek is inflamed," he said. "I believe I like you. . . ."

Her manner underwent a rapid and entire change. She appeared to forget

her hurts, the savage flight from the old man, the vengeful thoughts that had occupied all her consciousness a few seconds before. She smiled; she looked at Langhorne's face; she walked along in full strides at his side.

"You remember that fellow I was with the other morning?" she asked. "I love to make him feel bad! Do you know, he's afraid of my old man! I wasn't lying to you. I don't believe I'll marry him."

"You promised?"

"I tell you what I'm going to do," she said. "I'm going to tell Bredin that he's got to show me he's no coward. The next time my old man comes after me, he's got to thrash him. If he don't, I'm through with him. That's what I'm going to say to him the next time I see him—this afternoon, I guess."

Langhorne glanced at her determined face, conscious then of a certain fact.

In this one instance she was pursuing not a genuine emotion but an attitude. She was not in love and the young fellow whom she conditionally proposed to marry stirred none of her ardent emotions, aroused none of her obvious capacity for desire.

She contemplated marriage as a convention—the only inclination toward a convention that he had discovered in her. To be married was evidently one of the circumstances that she believed necessary in her life.

Langhorne smiled slightly. This was ironic. He almost wished that he himself were possessed of youth, illusions and emotions that he might make love to her, start a flame in her, and find within himself a corresponding fire.

IV

One evening, a few days later, returning from a long walk, Langhorne approached the clearing of his house and was surprised to find the girl sitting on the small porch, quite evidently waiting for him. He hurried toward her, and mounted the steps, smiling.

She returned his smile with a more frank expression of pleasure than he had ever seen before on her habitually sullen face.

"Hello," she said.

"I'm glad to see you here," he told her. "Is there anything special I can do for you?"

"Oh, no. I thought I'd like to talk a bit with you."

He sat down on the steps, leaning against one of the posts, turning his face up to hers.

"Have you had any more trouble these last few days?" he asked.

"The old man's been sober," she replied.

"He's all right when he's sober?"

"Well—I guess he's afraid of me when he's sober. He's never all right. I'm tired of all this. I want to get out of it!"

She seemed languid, weary, less vital than he had remembered her. She sat talking with her hands in her lap, her head inclined against the chair-back, using fewer of the abrupt gestures with which she ordinarily illustrated her speech. He found her none the less interesting because she was capable of a more subdued mood. She had still the appeal of freshness, the appeal of something new, of something fundamentally real.

He found that she made him a little uneasy; he could not approach her with the suavity to which he was accustomed, he could not predict just what she would do next.

She startled him when finally she stood up abruptly and ran down the steps without a word of preparation. All the flame of her vitality had returned. She was frowning.

"Must go!" she exclaimed. "I'll be over again some time soon. I like to talk to you. You're different."

She strode off down the path into the woods, with the energetic stride of a boy; he smiled as he watched her go.

The incongruity of her interest in him was amusing. Unquestionably she had never known a man of his sort; he was like one of another species, a different animal, something utterly new in the

shape of a human being. But this was a mutual attitude, for she was quite as novel to him.

A sense of the curious chances of life came to his thoughts. No one could have predicted his meeting with this girl and now that they knew each other, through an accident of acquaintance entirely outside their purpose or intent, no one could foresee what events might befall them.

As if looking at himself, the girl, the enormous boy whom she intended to marry, the father whom he had never met, from some aloof and detached ground of observation, he felt they were all the unconsulted reagents in an obscure chemistry of the fates, charged with potentialities, capable of unfathomed reactions.

He recalled the words of an old Spanish physician whom he had known some years before. They had been drinking whisky and soda together at Langhorne's club, surrounded with everything to make them at ease, detached for their whole lives, it appeared then, from any arduous concern over the more simple necessities of life. And commenting on this, the charming old man had said:

"Well, my friend, it's all smooth for us at present! But who knows anything about this time in the next year? Nothing will surprise me; perhaps I will be sitting in a dirty white apron, selling sausages in the market-place at Turino!"

The girl did as she had said. Two or three times every week she came to see Langhorne, always at about the same time.

She appeared in the evening, while it was still twilight, sat with him on the porch and talked continuously until she made her sudden departures. Once or twice she was accompanied by Bredin, who came with her as a silent and uncouth shadow, lounged on the steps with the air of being for ever ill at ease, and followed at her heels when she strode off into the woods like a docile and enormous bear.

Her conversation was frequently startling in its display of savagery; life presented itself to her as an adventure in fundamental intensities, a complex of passionate possibilities. She talked of hate and revenge; of shocking brutalities; of stark physical encounters. She had seen men killed by the pitilessness of inanimate nature and once she had witnessed a man clubbed to death in a brawl. The whole aspect of life took on for her the fantastic and almost unbelievable colour of lurid melodrama.

Meanwhile, Langhorne met her father. He came one evening, "just to get acquainted," he said, and talked for an hour or more with his hands in his pockets, pulling periodically on a blackened pipe. He bore a very great resemblance to his daughter—it was impossible to imagine what the dead mother may have been like. He had the same thick, tawny hair, the same sullenness of expression, but his movements lacked her abruptness without sacrificing any of the appearance of vitality that Langhorne had first observed in the daughter. The man was quite sober when he made this visit.

He had known these people perhaps a month when a startling adventure was precipitated that came to him nevertheless without any profound surprise, so surely had he felt it within their possibilities.

He was awakened early one morning, not long after midnight, by an insistent pounding noise. He sat up in bed, sleepy and confused, listening.

The noise, that seemed to vibrate through the wooden building like the repeated blows of some heavy instrument, was at first diffuse; he could not localize it. Then, more fully awake, he was aware that someone was pounding at the door below.

He threw back the blanket and jumped out of bed. He ran out in the hall and downstairs.

The knocking was continuous, urgent and very loud. He pushed back the bolt of the door and opened it.

Two figures were outside and he recognized them at once. The girl, with a raised fist—it must have been she who

had aroused him—was standing with her foot on the sill. Close behind her, like a dusk shadow of grotesque proportions, amorphous and huge in the darkness, was Bredin. He stood in a curiously inert attitude; his hands were hanging at his sides in a limp paralysis; his legs seemed to sag, partially illuminated by the insufficient glow of an oil lantern he held dangling in the fingers of one immense hand.

When the door was opened the girl, peering at Langhorne for a moment, turned suddenly, and, getting behind the apparently inanimate Bredin, pushed him in short vicious shoves over the threshold and into the house.

She slammed the door shut after her, and bolted it. Bredin dropped into a chair, seeming to swallow his support with the amplitude of his bulk, and sat without saying a word, his face covered with his hands, his elbows resting on his knees. Langhorne set the lamp near him on the table and now he could see that the boy was shivering with convulsive violence.

"You're alone?" the girl asked.

Her voice was tense, nervous, more harsh than ordinarily.

"Yes," said Langhorne.

"Look at that fool!" she said, pointing at Bredin with bitter contempt. "Hasn't he got a lot of nerve?"

"What's the matter? What has happened?"

"Wouldn't you think a big lump of flesh like that would have nerve enough in it to see him through?" she went on. "What did he wake up for? I could have done the thing myself!"

The boy said nothing. He sat in the same attitude and the chair shook with the convulsive movements of his body.

"What's he afraid of?" she continued, speaking louder now. "He must think there's a rope around his neck already. What does he expect to become of him—like that? Does he think he's got nerve enough left to do anything to help himself?"

She sat down suddenly, exhaling an exclamation of extreme venom and contempt.

Langhorne saw now that she was only half dressed; her shoes were untied; she seemed to have no stockings; her hair fell over her shoulders like unwound strands of heavy rope. He stood near her silent, waiting for her story.

She told it in exclamations, in fragments, punctuating it with abuse of her silent, shivering companion. She contorted her face with savage grimaces; she breathed in sharp gasps.

Her old man, she said, had come home after midnight, howling drunk. She was awakened by his curses at the door and she lay in bed, staring up into the darkness, waiting. He came in; he kicked a chair out of his way, and mounted the stairs in a stumbling ascent. He stopped in the hall near her room and swore for five or ten minutes—he cursed everything, the woods, the land, the house, Bredin, herself and finally, as was customary, his inebriate animosity concentrated itself upon her.

She lay very quiet, waiting. Then she heard him coming closer to her room; he opened the door. He was carrying a lantern in his hands. He dropped the lantern on the floor and made a rush at her bed. She rose up suddenly and flung the sheet over him; this gave her a second in which to elude him. Of course he was now enraged to madness; for a few moments he struggled with the entangling sheet and then charged her like a bull. She ran out into the hall and found the boy emerging from his room at the end of the corridor.

Bredin yelled at the old man to stop. His voice had a curious effect. She said her father paused abruptly, his head lowered, his matted hair falling forward into his eyes. He lifted his face and stared at the interposing figure of the excited boy.

Then he began to laugh and for a moment he chattered there in the hall like a mad ape. His cachinnation ceased with the abruptness with which it had begun; he clenched both his fists and rushed at Bredin. The two came together with the dull impact of hard

bodies. For some seconds they swayed in the hall in indistinct, furious gyrations; then they crashed to the floor together and the house resounded with the noise of their falling. The girl, panting, dishevelled, stood over them, watching the combat with wide eyes, with a keen delight.

For a time she could see nothing but the kicking of their legs, their flying arms, their twisting figures and from the interlocked pair came the cursing of her father. Then the two became more quiet; the cursing ceased; she could hear the hard breathing of only one of them.

She ran back to her room and got the lantern. She leaned over the two men. Bredin was on top and his two immense hands held her father's throat in an implacable, ineluctible grasp.

She pulled at his hands and he finally loosened his hold; he stood up and staggered against the wall. She bent over the old man; it was with a feeling of inevitability, without remorse, without any especial joy, that she saw him quite dead.

At this moment Bredin seemed for the first time to comprehend his act. He was at once the victim of an unnerving terror; his fright was pitiful.

But for this manifestation the girl had no pity and the admiration for him that had begun to vibrate in her consciousness changed instantly to contempt.

Nevertheless, seeing him helpless, she conceived it her duty to save him. He would be incapable of brazening out an inquiry. Nothing was left to him but the acknowledgment of guilt in flight. She forced him to put on his clothes and she had brought him with her to Langhorne.

"What are we going to do with him?" she asked.

From the beginning, the affair had held no surprise for Langhorne. He looked at the prostrated boy and understood his condition fully. The youth had been aroused to a primitive fury at the sight of danger to the girl he loved, but he had held no premeditated notion of murder. The knowledge of his act came as an overwhelming blow.

Watching him, the older man experienced an emotion of profound pity. Deeply interested, he determined to play out this rôle that had come to him unasked. He sat in silence for several minutes.

Finally he stood up, addressing the girl.

"Keep him here," he said, "for a while. I'll get dressed and then bring out my car from the shed. I'll drive him down to the city and if I make good time we'll be well on our way before daybreak. I'll get him into a room there and have him keep under cover for a while. A searching originating in a place like this can't reach very far —no one will ever find him. Afterward I'll come back and take you down to him."

She said nothing, but as he passed out of the room he saw her looking at him with a smile, a smile for his resourcefulness, a smile for her admiration.

This somehow thrilled him, and the fact that she could thrill him gave him an instant surprise.

V

LANGHORNE executed his plan without any difficulty. For the first part of the trip he kept the boy half prone in the back of the car, covered over with a pile of blankets. When they were out of the mountains he permitted him to sit up.

The youth had nothing to say. He no longer shivered as he had some hours before, but he seemed dead and half comatose, incapable of independent action. They reached the city late the night following their escape. Langhorne had driven continuously and he was enormously weary. Nevertheless, he persisted until he found a cheap lodging-house for the boy and saw him safe in his room. Then he went to his apartment and fell to sleep instant-

ly; he did not awaken until the next afternoon.

He stayed in the city a day before making the return trip. Going back now, the first sight of the mountain landscape impressed him deeply; the sinister ridges in the purple distance seemed to brood over inscrutable secrets. He reached his house in the afternoon at much the same time as he had arrived in the first instance. He did not see the girl until a day later.

She told him all that had happened in his absence. Of course Bredin, who had disappeared, was held guilty and the sheriff had searching parties hunting the woods for him. They were confident that he would soon be discovered. When questioned she had denied any witnessing of the murder; she claimed that a noise had awakened her in the night, but on listening and hearing no further sounds she had gone to sleep. In the morning she said she had discovered her father lying in the hall. Their farm hand, Bredin, was gone.

He talked to the girl less than an hour this time. They agreed not to see each other for several weeks, in order to prevent any inquiries directing themselves toward Langhorne.

When he left her he experienced an hour or two of sincere surprise. It came to him then how curiously and spontaneously he had become involved in this affair, and yet how much outside its inner heart he was after all. He shared none of the elemental emotions of these people, not the hate and malice of the girl, nor the impulse to kill and the reaction of abject fear that had come to the boy in the city, nor the brutal rage of her murdered father. He was differentiated from them as completely as the people of another star.

Several weeks passed by and the search for the unfortunate Bredin relaxed and dwindled. The death of an obscure farmer made only a restricted and local stir. Since his daughter was now alone she stated her intention of leaving the farm and going down to the city; she spoke vaguely of her relatives. The day was fixed when Langhorne was to take her with him in his car.

She came to him early one morning, wearing strangely ill-fitting clothes and carrying a small handbag. She seemed subdued and more than ordinarily sullen. She had very little to say; they drove away in silence.

As Langhorne steered the car into the tortuous lane and the shadows of the tall trees fell over it in a sinister and implacable caress, he turned and looked back at the house. Already it had begun to bore him; he knew he would not return. The series of episodes that had made so long a stay possible was now entering its concluding stage.

He glanced at the girl sitting by his side. Her face was fixed in front, her lips were compressed and the changing shadows of the close branches that brushed the sides of the car came and went on her face with the singular effect of penumbra thrown from the spread wings of dark, unseen birds. She was still silent.

They drove steadily until it was noon and stopped along the edge of the woods to eat the lunch they had brought with them. Both got out of the car and walked about a little to ease their cramped muscles. Then they sat down at the edge of the road and unpacked their lunch. They ate in silence.

As they were about to rise, the girl put out her hand quickly and clasped his in a tense, hard grip.

"Why are you taking me to him?" she asked. "That isn't my plan!"

He looked at her, surprised.

"Where do you want to go?" he asked.

She held his hand, she looked at his face intently, her eyes narrowed a little. She seemed to be speculating, hesitating over a decision.

And then she seized his head between her hands and with a swift, resistless movement drew his face against her own.

She found his lips and kissed him; she gave him a strange thrill of fear. She startled him; her kisses were pas-

sionate, intense, clinging. These were not, he knew, the kisses of a formula, the kisses given lightly, the kisses exchanged in the easy game of love he had played so often, but were the physical expression of an urgent and genuine emotion, to which he was without the power of response. He felt immensely oppressed, a little giddy, and he drew in a rapid breath of relief when she dropped her imprisoning hands and spoke to him.

"You're not going to take me to him," she said. "I'm going to be with you!"

She made no further attempt to embrace him.

They got into the car again and continued their journey. But now, when he stole glances at her, he saw a profound assurance in her face, a certainty of her purpose, a confidence in the outcome of her plans. During the remainder of the trip she was as silent as before, but now her silence was more meaningful, as if she were waiting, were infinitely expectant, were pausing for the proper moment of avowal and assurance by speech and action.

He began to pity her, and in a small degree to pity himself. She had no means to measure his complete separation from her, the aloofness of an utterly different life. And he, too, had a regrettable lack; whatever capacity for fire had been his youthful endowment, the fuel of the flame had gone unseen, like an escaping vapour into the spent days of his other years.

And mixed with these emotions came his never-failing appreciation of persistent irony: how ironic it was that he should have been the chosen agent to bring her her futile hopes, her unavailing visions, her purposeless dreams!

He began to smile; his aplomb returned; he was in full possession of himself.

They entered the city the next morning. He drove her straight to the room where he knew the boy was waiting. She did not question him; her faith seemed boundless. He stopped before the house and helped her to alight.

They went in together and he led the way upstairs. He paused outside a room on the second floor. He opened the door and with a gentle push thrust her over the threshold into the room. He heard a clumsy movement of someone inside rising from a chair. He did not wait to observe the expression of joy that would come to the face of the boy, nor her own deep dismay.

He closed the door suddenly and ran down the stairs. He ran until he was out of the house and in his car. He drove away in a half-flight with the sound of the eager roar of the engine accompanying him like a symbol of escape.

He had decided to go back and see his wife. He knew she would receive him quietly, even graciously. He saw very clearly, with entire assurance, the smile she would give him, and heard the words she would say. This was comforting—to be assured, to understand. He left behind him, in a room presided over by brick walls whose gloom counterfeited the sinister brooding of their own moods, these two of a more elemental age, who knew the sincerities of hate, of despair, of passion, of hope. . . .

A WOMAN thinks of her husband in terms of other men, but a man thinks of other women in terms of his wife.

WILD OATS

By Joseph Bibb, Jr.

THERE was both a simplicity and a lordliness about retiring that gave him a more than double delight. How often had he looked forward longingly to the day. His heart had been in his work, true; yet a man of any breadth must admit that there are other things in life, other beauties, than leather and findings. And now retirement was possible. He had made his little nest-egg. And the business was so smoothly running a machine that the quest of surprises was ended. One is entitled to leisure in the declining years.

Not that he felt declining. Still, one does not live for ever. There must be ample time for the well-earned quiet. Besides, retirement some time is incumbent on a man of culture. There were so many who worked on to the end for the lack of the saving grace, the philosophy, the taste, as it were.

He at least was not dead to the fine things of leisure. He would retire: he decided upon it forthwith and benignance lighted his mind at the thought of the easeful future. There was so much for him now, so much that he had always wanted, as a man of taste. And perhaps he no longer would be alone. A sharer at the fireside—who could tell? He would retire at once: upon his birthday. That came next week. The day would mark a rounded period of active life. It should be arranged at once. His birthday . . . his ninety-first birthday.

SONG

By Glenn Ward Dresbach

I HAVE loved the rainbows
And the wild gusts of rain,
And white ships in the dark storms,
And leopard-women twain.

I have loved the red dawns
And waters deep and blue,
And roads that burned with moonlight—
How can I love you?

MIRAGE

By E. Michaelis

THEY had been a dream, these last two hours, a dream from which perchance she should expect no realization. And yet she hoped, as one may hope when one is young and still confident that the power for good ultimately rules all things. She hoped joyously and madly because she knew that never again could she endure the innumerable days, out on the desert "alone," she found herself saying, with her sister and the children.

Her head lay back upon the cushion, the dusky eyes half closed, the lips drawn into a tight line. It was not a pretty face, at times it might have been ugly, glorified it would have been beautiful; but faces do not become glorified out on the Mojave desert where the sand-storms wail and the heat wilts.

It all seemed so strange to her now. Why, why had she not? But the question remained unfinished, her lips trembled, and the whole episode rushed back upon her mind with an intensity that she had not felt when it actually occurred.

It had lasted but a short time and it had not been a grand passion. If only she had expected no more. If only she could have realized at twenty that the "grand passion" is the exception that we read of in the novel, and that for you and me and all of us who are not very rich, nor very good, nor very beautiful, the companionship of two loyal souls is the usual ideal to await successfully.

He had been handsome and she had liked him; perhaps if she had not just then read "Guinevere" she would have thought she loved him, but so soon after that it all seemed too commonplace.

Now after the three months they had decided to wait before they should meet again, if they were ever to meet, she knew that her only possible happiness in life was to follow him for better or for worse to the ends of the earth. Again and again she thrilled with joy, that instead of saying "no" for ever she had said that they would meet again at the end of three months in Needles, if he should feel as he had felt three months before and if she should love him.

It was a seven-hour ride she had to make to the place of their tryst, and the miles dragged on interminably. The small desert hills burned black by the sun seemed to radiate heat; the greasewood blinded the eyes with its headachy greyness; no stir of life betrayed that the desert was a part of God's busy world. But in the infinite distances she could discern the vague outline of the opalescent mountains and it seemed to her that beyond them cool meadows shaded by big, shaggy trees must stretch for ever.

As again she became vaguely conscious of life around her, she became for the first time specifically aware of the young man across the aisle who was eyeing her in the very casual manner of the youth who expects to have the overwhelming pleasure of opening a window, with a disagreeable lock, for a lonesome young lady, or possibly of picking up a handkerchief. But being unlearned in the wiles of railway flirtation she leaned over and asked him how long it would be before they would reach Needles.

Being a very obliging young man and

a very bored one, he not only gave the desired information, but slid over beside her and began to tell her of Needles, which she had not seen. It was a small town he told her, and in that stage of would-be civilization in which the elite play bridge for silk stockings and read sceptical magazines. It was a pleasant place to be, however, he added, if one were not inclined to be bored, but—

Surprised to find her paying little attention, or at least not emitting the usual feminine gurgles of interest, he labelled her a bore and excusing himself as soon as possible resorted to the smoker for the remainder of the trip.

Once more she leaned back, her lips slightly parted, and this time a smile hovering near them.

"Needles," cried the conductor, and from the window she marked the conglomeration of engines, trees and smoke-stacks that greet one upon entering the town. Hastily and nervously she alighted.

"Tan sants, twanty-five sants," droned the Mojave squaws with their strings of beads, but novel as it all would have seemed at any other time within the past five years, to-day she hastened from it into the little waiting-room, the place of tryst. It was a vile, cell-like place with benches around the walls on which were hung soiled advertising pictures of the Yosemite and Grand Canyon; and it was empty except for a Mexican woman and her brood. She hastened to the ticket office to learn that the train on which he would arrive was late and would not come for twenty minutes. She sat a moment and then walked out into the open court between the Harvey House and the tracks. The afternoon sun had caused most pedestrians to desert except the trainmen and the Mojave squaws, who still held up their wares, droning, "Tan sants, twanty-five sants."

In the distance a train whistled. Three minutes later it came to a stop before the Harvey House.

She waited, with a sensation she had felt but once before. It had been six years before when the doctor had told her that her mother might live, but the doctor had not known.

As in a dream she watched the usual passengers alight—the laughing soldiers, the lady travelling for her health, the woman with the two marriageable daughters, the fat drummer, the three college boys, but the tall familiar figure she saw only in her mind's eye.

The train soon became empty, the travellers swarming into the Harvey House. For a moment she thought she would fall, but, gaining control of herself, she stumbled through the vague darkness toward the waiting-room. For several moments she sat there unconscious of the Mexican baby playing to her, unconscious of the eyes of the ticket agent fixed curiously upon her, unconscious of all save her own dumb, blank, overwhelming misery. At length she walked to the ticket window and asked in a firm voice for a return ticket. Her train would leave in fifteen minutes.

HANDSOME MEN

NOTHING so improves personal appearance as that slight smooth tan which comes with exposure to the sun and air.

"SUNBRONZE DE LUXE"

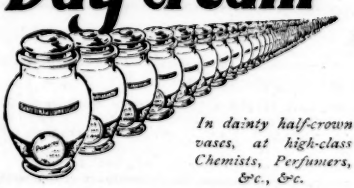
gives a perfect simulation of this tint, is **undetectable, perfectly harmless, and absolutely genuine,** to which its 5,000 testimonials received from every quarter of the globe is sufficient evidence. Unique in method and perfection of result, SUNBRONZE DE LUXE has stood the **TEST OF TIME.** Forwarded free from observation, price **10/6** (*Mark II de Luxe*, **3 guineas**). Fresh Complexion Tint for Ladies, on same principle, at same prices. Direct from

Sunbronze Laboratories, 157, Church St., Stoke Newington, London. (*Established* 1908.)

The Toilet Cream de Luxe

POMEROY DAY CREAM is, of all "vanishing" creams, the most delightful. It has a lovely effect on the skin and is so fragrant and refreshing that one wants to be using it always. Being non-greasy and vanishing it can be used any time, any day. The more one uses it, the better for the skin, which is rendered soft, smooth, and fresh, and is protected against wind and weather.

Pomeroy Day Cream



In dainty half-crown vases, at high-class Chemists, Perfumers, &c., &c.

MRS. POMEROY, LTD.
29, Old Bond Street, London, W.

WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO WRITE

AS P.C.C. STUDENTS DO

For the "Smart Set," "Bristol Times," "Daily Chronicle," "Daily News," "Everyman," "London Magazine," "Manchester Guardian," "Mirror," "Nottingham Guardian," "Pall Mall Gazette," "Sheffield Weekly Telegraph," "Strand," "Tit-Bits," "To-Day," "Westminster Gazette," and other leading publications of the Kingdom?

THE demand to-day for bright, readable paragraphs, articles, short stories, serials, etc., exceeds the supply. Glance at any bookstall and estimate the number of daily, weekly and monthly publications.

Over 500 of them invite contributions; about 150 want fiction—the kind of story that everyone who can indite an interesting letter may learn to write.

Beginner's Opportunities.

The old idea that the writer's craft is poorly paid and precarious no longer obtains. There's a good living in it for the *trained* beginner, and very tempting plums for those who hit the public taste.

Once you have a reputation, there is scarcely any limit to the money you may earn.

A Go-As-You-Please Profession.

Wouldn't you like to enter a Go-As-You-Please Profession in which there is money to be earned any day and every day?

Wouldn't you like to earn money in your spare time at home?

To adopt a vocation to which you can give either a few hours a week or your whole time; which requires no capital, and in which you can earn while learning?

Natural Ability and Common Sense.

Did you ever see a conjurer doing tricks that seemed impossible, and yet when he showed you how they were done, you felt how easily you too could learn to do them? It is very similar to writing for publication. Successful authorship depends as much on knowing the tricks as upon natural ability and common sense.

Writing is open to all classes, all vocations, all temperaments, all environments.

Periodicals that Pay Most for Your Work.

Success in writing depends upon the extent to which you can interest readers, and upon your sending your MSS. in the right form at the right time to the periodicals that pay most for your work.

In his analysis of the most successful work of the most successful writers of the present century the tutor has discovered in all of them a most arresting obedience to certain definite laws—laws which, boiled down, classified and embodied in a series of lessons, constitute one of the features of his Course.

His world-wide experience as a journalist enables him to add to his formulæ for success a wealth of wonderfully practical tips.

Special Scholarships for "Smart Set" Readers Without Entrance Fee.

The Practical Correspondence College has reserved a limited number of scholarships for those whose specimen MSS. show unusual promise. A scholarship entitles you to receive at half fees the P.C.C. Course of spare time study.

Send, with stamped envelope, a *small* specimen of your work—short story, article, descriptive letter, or a plot for novel, play or film—to the Editor-in-Chief, Advisory Department, Practical Correspondence College, 5, Thanet House, Strand, W.C. 2. After he has read it he will write you a *letter of constructive* criticism and advice. He will tell you frankly whether your writing shows promise, and probably indicate in which direction you are most likely to achieve success.

ABOUT FASHIONS AND OTHER THINGS

By Various Hands

Now that summer is upon us in all its glory, who does not long for the cool of the countryside and all the joys that it stands for? But the country without the right frock can be a very depressing place indeed, for the days when one wore any old rag because "it didn't matter" are past and gone, and unless one is well dressed, which is another word for being suitably dressed, one is distinctly apt to take a back place unless gifted with exceptional beauty and charm. Few women realize the importance of looking their best at all times: so many are apt to make the fatal mistake of "letting themselves go" when they think there is no one there to see. A fatal mistake, it is a dangerous habit that grows. Surely it is just as important to look well groomed when taking the dogs for an early morning run, dressed in a rough tweed, as it is when going to one of those large garden parties for which one has to be prepared. The tweed may have seen much service, but it is none the less chic for that if it has the *cachet* of a really good tailor.

An exceptionally useful thing to possess at this time of year is a light-coloured flannel coat and skirt. Some of these have a thin stripe on a foundation of light grey or sand colour, and when cut on French lines, with a three-quarter length coat of the truly feminine persuasion boasting long revers and a girdle, nothing could be more attractive, and it is one of the very few garments that can do duty on almost all occasions in town or country, besides being able to withstand a small shower of rain.

Tennis is enjoying even more popularity than usual this year, and is always a problem to the girl with a limited luggage allowance. An unlimited number of white cotton skirts and blouses are apt to take up such a lot of room, and not so very long ago they were the only possible thing if one wanted to be correct and workmanlike.

But those little fads have also vanished with the snows of yesterday, and now the really well-dressed girl has the simplest of little all-in-one muslins and cottons, guiltless of lining, that take up no space at all, and are merely held in loosely with an apology of a waistband, giving plenty of freedom. Most of them have quite short or elbow-length sleeves, which is another boon to the enthusiastic player.

An adorable little French model has just been made in striped blue and white handkerchief lawn, with short sleeves and no trimming at all. The wide neck opening is finished with a thin cord that is knotted loosely in front. It is perfectly straight from neck to hem, the position of the waist being indicated by a cross-way band of the same lawn taking the stripes almost—not quite—round the figure. The front width continues straight downwards from the throat to the very deep hem, which also is of lawn, with the stripes going round instead of being perpendicular. A wide panama hat is destined to be worn with this practical little frock. For the doubtful days when the sun proves a faithless ally, there is the skirt of cream flannel, and the jumper of silk jersey in some brilliant hue.

Silk jerseys will be worn all the summer, although its popularity is already on the wane with those in high places, and very little of it is to be seen in the most advanced salons. It is being ousted slowly and surely by the ever popular charmeuse and crêpe-de-chine. Those of us who have hoarded up precious bits of old muslin embroidery are to be congratulated, for it has seldom been so much in request. It is even used with charmeuse and taffetas, and makes delightful little inner sleeves and vests. A very pretty débutante's frock was made with the jumper top entirely of white embroidery. From the hips downwards it was attached to a skirt of lingerie pleated lawn; the sleeves were short and unadorned, and the usual

Behind the Scenes

"CAN I have some Crême Abracadabrant?" I asked over the wide counter piled high with glittering bottles. The man behind it answered obsequiously:

"No, madam, it is unobtainable owing to the war. Can I show you . . . ." his head turned suddenly and his voice trailed away vaguely—". . . . anything else?"

I noticed other people turning their heads, too, and glanced in the same direction. Buyers and sellers had unaccountably stopped their business and were staring wide-eyed at a woman who was approaching the counter at which I stood. Her face was extraordinarily attractive and somehow familiar. Where had I seen that triangular face with its transparent, exquisitely white skin, small features, and red, curved mouth before? Surely I knew those wide shining grey eyes with their rim of dark lashes? Then I leaped to recollection . . . of course—how stupid of me. It was Gabrielle Mornay, who had come into her own on the London stage a year or two before. I had been introduced to her at a big party in her less celebrated days. She smiled a little at the excitement her appearance caused, and the grey eyes looked round a little doubtfully, then suddenly caught and held mine. "Forgive me—but I have met you before, I think . . . . is it not Mrs. Desmond's little sister Estelle?" I acknowledged myself, and was rewarded by a slim hand thrust through my arm and an interested stare from the shoppers. I relinquished my unsuccessful inquiries for face-cream, and listened while Mlle. Mornay gave orders.

"I want one packet . . . no—two packets of mercolised wax," she said.

The shopman looked a trifle surprised. "Yes, madame, and what else?"

"Oh, I think that is all . . . no, wait . . . a quarter of a pound of stallax."

"You will not try our new complexion cream . . . 10/6 in a jar de luxe . . . or this powder?"

She shook her head, smiling.

"That is absolutely all . . . thank you. This is my parcel?"

She took the modest package from the man, whose face was a study in mingled disdain and admiration.

"Mademoiselle Estelle," said Gabrielle Mornay as she left the counter, "would you be so nice as to come back to tea with me, if you have nothing better to do?"

* * * * *

Half an hour later I was in Gabrielle Mornay's delightful flat.

"Do you mind having tea in my little boudoir?" she asked. "I am back rather late, and I like to rest before the evening show."

While she was changing from her street frock I noticed various quaint crystal jars with enamel tops which contained powders and creams totally unlike anything I had seen before.

"Do you carry your originality into your toilet things?" I asked laughing.

"Perhaps," she answered with her quick delightful smile—"perhaps not . . . it depends whether you call it original to be thoroughly old-fashioned."

"Old-fashioned!" I exclaimed. "But your critics always call you the very spirit of modernity."

"Even critics sometimes make mistakes," she said demurely. "But since you are so curious, you shall guess the contents of those jars. They are all perfectly ordinary things which you can buy at any chemist's."

Some yellow granules in a tall jar seemed familiar. "Well, these are bath salts," I said with assurance.

"Wrong," she laughed. "Haven't you ever seen stallax before? Your education has been neglected, my child. What does one use it for? Why, to wash the hair, of course. I have used it for years—I like a nice foamy shampoo which really makes your hair clean and wavy—you certainly ought to use it with that pretty fair hair of yours. It makes even my black mop look rather nice, don't you think?"

"I should think so," I said, glancing at the dark shining ripples of her hair.

"Are you wondering why I don't dye it golden?" she queried provokingly. "Aren't all actresses supposed to? You see, I *am* original, after all! I'll tell you something rather strange. Do you remember when I was playing in 'The Dying Fire'?"

"Do I remember?" I exclaimed. "What next?"

"Well, you know, it began to affect my nerves, playing such a tragic thing night after night. Even my hair began to turn grey in streaks. Well I've always had a foolish prejudice against dyeing my hair—and before going to such desperate means, I thought I would try ordinary tammalite, which an old nurse of mine had great faith in. To please her I bought a little, mixed it with bay rum, and used it for a few nights. To my great joy, no more grey hairs appeared, the ones already there regained their old colour, and my hair grew gloriously thick. Of course I'm never without it now. Another old-fashioned thing—you'll see some in that big flask—is silmerine. It is so lovely to be independent of a hairdresser . . . and when one's pet maid is likely to rush away at a moment's notice it is absolutely necessary to be able to produce a wave without curling tongs—which, incidentally, *ruins* one's hair. At night I just damp my hair with a little silmerine—and in the morning my famous 'ripple' appears and lasts for several days. Am I not nice to tell you all this?"

"You are indeed," I said. "I'm rather curious about the stuff you bought this afternoon—some kind of wax . . ."

"Oh, mercolised wax, of course," said Gabrielle. "Why, that's the foundation of everything for me. It is applied like ordinary cold cream—but it acts in a very different manner. Whereas cold cream blocks up the pores of the skin and makes the skin greasy, mercolised wax absorbs the old soiled skin, and leaves the new skin which is fresh and clear, exposed."

"This is intensely interesting," I exclaimed. "I have always admired that white rose-leaf complexion of yours."

"It is entirely due to mercolised wax," said my friend. "I bought two packets to-day—one lasts me for months—won't you take the other to please me? One other thing—have you noticed there is no powder on my dressing-table? I use cleminite instead—that pretty pink lotion there—it gives a much better effect than powder and lasts for several hours. It is such a joy to be perfectly assured that one's nose *cannot* be greasy for quite a long time . . . it makes life twice as enjoyable. . . . Good heavens—how late it is—I am dining at 6.45 with two friends of mine. Be a dear and make a fourth. Would you be bored to come round afterwards to my show . . . there's a box for the three of you."

"I think," I said, "I could endure it."

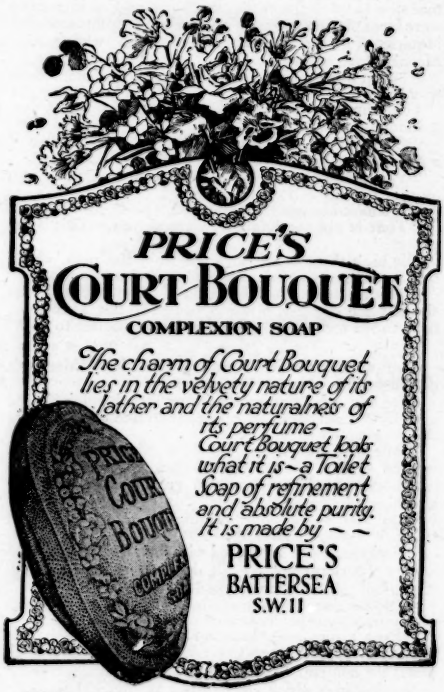
girdle appeared at the waist. A very large shady hat wreathed in wild flowers crowned this very charming frock, which will look quite its best in a punt or a shady garden this summer.

Another delightfully cool frock was carried out in white cotton georgette forming a wide bib and apron effect back and front. This was joined to the white material with hemstitching, so that there was only one thickness of material. It was slit at either side from shoulder to hem to show an under-dress and elbow sleeves of the white cotton georgette. A strip of the blue completed the neck opening, and the over-dress boasted a fairly wide hem of the blue, also attached with hemstitching. It was held in at the waist with a blue kid belt. Foulard is with us once more, but some of the patterns are of such a razzle-dazzle description that we shall find our menkind adopting the sunglasses that they have brought back from the glare of Mesopotamia if we are not careful. However, the plain spots and checks are harmless enough, and very cool and practical. Most of the more dressy frocks have side draperies that give a slightly barrel effect without being ungraceful. The better frocks have a tendency to show a distinct waist line, and sashes that really hold in the waist once more are more ubiquitous than ever, though the muslin and lawn models are still of the straight frock type.

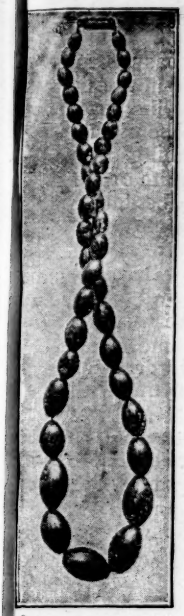
There is a great feeling for fine black lace (chantilly for preference) over filmy georgette both for evening and afternoon wear, and one of the newest models made for Ascot is well worth describing. The bodice, with its elbow sleeves, was of plain palest pink georgette veiled in front with some beautiful cobwebby chantilly. The waist was held in with a folded sash of black charmeuse knotted to one side; the back was just a square panel of the charmeuse; the skirt was all black and beautifully draped. With this was worn a very wide flat picture hat of black manilla, from which hung a wide and deep lace veil, which fell right over the pale georgette sleeves, giving a very dainty and ethereal effect to the whole. A black lace parasol, and the picture was complete. Dyed manilla or panama hats promise to be very popular.

UNSIGHTLY BLEMISHES

Only the woman who has suffered from having a wart or other unsightly blemish on face or neck can understand what a great blessing is conferred on fellow-sufferers by anyone who can remove such disfigurements; but, of course, if a mark or scar is left behind, then the treatment is worse than useless. Mrs. Adair, of 92, New Bond Street, London, Paris, and New York, the well-known and very successful skin specialist, has over and over again proved her skill in removing superfluous hair, moles, warts, broken veins, and other skin blemishes, without leaving the smallest scar behind. Her skill in all branches of the toilet specialist's art is well known, and among her other extremely useful preparations she has a special cream for removing red veins from the face. Then her Ganesh Dare Treatment is for home use; it is not a depilatory, but removes hair by the roots, and leaves no mark or scar.


PRICE'S
COURT BOUQUET
COMPLEXION SOAP
The charm of Court Bouquet lies in the velvety nature of its lather and the naturalness of its perfume — Court Bouquet looks what it is — a Toilet Soap of refinement and absolute purity. It is made by — —
PRICE'S
BATTERSEA
S.W.11

Miniature Sample Tablets will be forwarded upon receipt of 2d. for postage.
PRICE'S, BATTERSEA, S.W. 11



. The .

"Cameo Corner"

Managed to procure a large stock of uncommon real

CARNELIAN BEADS

Deep Red Colour, also Yellow Amber Colour, round and egg-shape.

ALSO

Large Variety

OF

Other Beads

Selections sent on approval.

GOOD'S

"Cameo Corner"

1, NEW OXFORD ST., LONDON, W.C. 1

Telephone: Regent 4269

Telegrams: "Goocamecor, Westcent, London."

£20 IN MONEY PRIZES

are offered each month by the Monthly Magazine, **"THE FUTURE,"** The Official Organ of THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE UNION, for an **ESSAY**, and for short translations from **FRENCH** and **ITALIAN** into **ENGLISH** and **ENGLISH** into **ESPERANTO**. All interested in Foreign Affairs, Art, Commerce, and Education, should read **"THE FUTURE"**—*vide* Press. Send P.O. **7d.** for Specimen No.: **THE FUTURE** (Dept. S.S.), 11/12 SOUTHAMPTON BUILDINGS, HIGH HOLBORN, W.C. 2.

TYPEWRITER FOR SALE.

AN absolutely new "HAMMOND" Typewriter for Sale. Multiplex, newest model (portable). A bargain.—Write "H," c/o "THE SMART SET" MAGAZINE, 265, Strand, London, W.C. 2.

Can You Copy This Dawson Girl?

IF SO you can learn—and earn while learning—how to illustrate advertisements, design Posters, Book-covers, etc., and make sketches now in such demand by Advertisers, Printers, and Publishers.

CHAS. E. DAWSON, creator of the "Dawson Girl," can teach you by his original system of easy, interesting, and *Practical* Home Study.

Copy test sketch in pencil or ink (any size), or send small sketch in any media (with stamps for return) to Mr. Dawson, Practical Correspondence College 5, Thanet House, Strand, W.C. 2.

You will receive *gratis a conscientious* constructive criticism and Expert opinion on your chance of success in this profession, also full particulars of the course.

25 "Smart Set" Scholarships entitling winners to full course at half fees payable in small monthly instalments, awarded to those who send most promising specimen sketches.

A Permanent Youthful Appearance.

Mrs. ADAIR'S

EASTERN MUSCLE OIL

TRADE MARK.

Removes all Lines, Fills out Hollows, Gives and Retains for you a Good, Clear, Healthy and Natural Complexion.

Nearer to the Natural Oil of the Skin than any yet invented.
Reaches the Muscles and Tissues, and is a Youth Restorer.

Original and Unsolicited Testimonials can be seen.

Prices 12/6, 21/6, and 35/6. Small Sample Size, 5/6. Largest Size sufficient for One Year.

Adair Ganesh Establishment, 92, NEW BOND STREET (Oxford St. End.) LONDON, W.
Also PARIS and NEW YORK.

Telephone—GERRARD 3782.

MOTORS AND MOTORING

By W. Whittall

PROFITEERING IN THE THIRD DEGREE

Many a time of late I have spoken plain words about the shameless profiteering that is going on where cars are concerned. The selling of motor-cars has become a worse business than horse-coping or thimble-rigging, in which everyone is out to take the ultimate advantage of the buyer, and where the latter stands no earthly chance of getting 50 per cent. value for his money. I have called the profiteers all sorts of names, printable and unprintable, and I thought they deserved them. But now I desire to offer them my most humble, even abject apology for having dared to abuse them for the trifling sins of which they have been guilty. For I realize that their faults have been venial in comparison with those of the arch-examplars of the gentle art of profiteering, the Government departments. Listen to this, a perfectly true story, vouched for by witnesses whose credibility is beyond a doubt. In 1917 a nearly new Rolls-Royce belonging to a member of the A.A. was impressed by the commandeerers of the Government, and an arbitrary sum of £1,300 paid for it—a sum which was below its then value. The car was recently traced to the possession of the Admiralty, and, following representations made by the Association, was handed over to the Government Property Surplus Disposal Board, which department was then approached on behalf of the owner, who wished to repossess himself of his car. The Board's decision is that the owner shall pay the full present-day market value as assessed by the Board's experts—viz., £2,600. If this is not profiteering in the third degree, I should like to be told what it is.

TAKE CARE OF THE CAR!

Thefts of motor-cars have become so frequent of late that it is very necessary to utter a word of warning in this connection. No motorist, particularly in the Metropolitan area, should leave his car unattended without first taking due precautions against theft. It is, after all, a very simple matter to chain a wheel, to remove the magneto distributor or the high-tension leads. Some people advocate locking the petrol feed to the carburettor, but I do not think that is at all an adequate measure of safety. An expert thief would not hesitate a moment about a trifle like that. To remove the unions or cut the piping and slip a length of rubber tubing over the ends would not take a minute or so. There is one way of making absolutely certain that the car cannot be moved if fitted with the Bosch magneto of the D4 type, and I am confident that not one car thief in a hundred knows of the tip. I am not going to make them as wise as myself, but if any motoring reader wants to know and will drop me a post-card, I will pass it on with pleasure. Another point that requires attention in these dishonest days is the safety of spare wheels and tyres. There is a veritable epidemic of spare wheel and tyre thieving just now, and it will be as well if every motorist will see these spares securely fastened to the car by a chain and lock.

A STARTER NOTE AND OTHER MATTERS

I have been asked whether it is worth while fitting an electric starter to a car of a very good pre-war model which is not so equipped by its makers. The answer in this case is: Certainly. As to what type and make should be adopted, I should advise one like the Brolt, which effects a start through a pinion on the armature shaft of the starting motor, gearing into a toothed ring on the engine flywheel. I do not care overmuch for the frictional type of starter; the positive drive of gearing is infinitely better. As to how to get the fitting done and the cost, the best advice I can give is to communicate with me or Messrs. Brown Bros., of Great Eastern Street, E.C., who will, I doubt not, be pleased to give all possible information regarding the actual price of the outfit and the cost of fitting. I may say I had a starter of this type fitted to a car before the war, and during the whole time I had it I was never let down on any single occasion. Of course, the fitting of a starter means also that a dynamo will have to be installed, which will not only keep the starting batteries up to their work, but will supply current for a lighting circuit as well. However, Messrs. Brown Bros. will be able to supply all necessary information as to this.

"My Kingdom for a 'Brolt'"

The 'Brolt' Electric Self-Starter sets the engine running instantly and every time

BROWN BROTHERS LTD.

20-34, GREAT EASTERN STREET, E.C. 2.

Showrooms: 13, Newman Street, W. 1.

And at Manchester, Dublin, Paris and Melbourne.

IT is famous for its shrewd and humorous analysis of current events, and its caustic comments are valued by men of affairs.

Its list of subscribers is practically the Army and Navy List.

To casual purchasers its price is **2d.** at any bookstall or newsagent.

"TOWN TOPICS"

(THE JOY RAG)

BYRON HOUSE, 35, FLEET ST.,

LONDON, E.C. 4

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertisements are charged under Headings 1/3 per line.

SCIENCE

YOUR DESTINY.—A scientific investigation into the forces controlling your destiny. Interesting revelations. To know which send full birth-date with 2/6 P.O. A detailed delineation for 5/- and extended for 10/6. Include time and place of birth for these. Each order receives my personal attention.—ROBERT RAYE, 97 Broadsbury Villas, Kilburn, London, N.W.6

PERSONAL SERVICE

WRIGHT'S DETECTIVES. For Private Inquiries and Secret Watchings this Agency stands facile princeps for ability; vide Press; consultations free. T.N., London Wall 8,977. Edgar Wright, Manager, 29, MOORGATE ST. (near Bank of England). West End Branch, 125, Oxford St., W. (T.N., Regent 4,850.)

DRESS

SMART GOWNS, Costumes, Furs, etc., at quarter original cost.—The Central Dress Agency, 14, Upper Baker Street (next to Bakerloo Tube).

LITERARY

AUTHORS

Mr. Magnus is demobilised. Book accepted by Mr. Melrose two days after receipt. £108 in Prizes, free, for Short Stories, Articles, and Poems. Awards every month. Stamp for particulars. Cambridge Literary Agency, 8, Henrietta Street, London, W.C. 2.

BOOKS

"HOW TO WIN WEEKLY," an interesting little book clearly explaining how to obtain A REGULAR INCOME FROM RACING. Price 3d.—SIMPLEX CO., 1, New Oxford Street, W.C. 1.

Send Six Prints for

Gratis Constructive Criticism

Enclose stamp for return, post to Photo Editor, Practical Correspondence College, 5, Thanet House Strand, W.C. 2. In a few posts they will come back to you with a candid letter of advice, and the liveliest and most outspoken booklet ever written about

press photography as a profitable hobby

Scholarship Competition

without Entrance Fee for "Smart Set" readers. Entitling those who send most promising photos to the P.C.C. Course of Training at half fees.